

'The knowledge would be brimming over'
A Guide to County Donegal's Oral Recordings



by
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An Action of the County Donegal Heritage Plan

Images on Front Cover (from left to right):

Collectors of folklore in County Donegal, Dr. Seán Ó hEochaidh and Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald. The title of the guide is taken from the notes of Ó hEochaidh, when referring to the noted storyteller Anna Nic an Lúain.

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CAPTURING MOMENTS OF MEMORY

“On the top I talked to Seán about the vast importance of the work he is about to begin, and I urged him to do his best for the honour of his native country and of the dead generations whose lore he is about to collect. I trust and pray that he will be successful, as so much depends on him in this first (and last) effort at the collection of the oral literature of Donegal.”

Seamus Ó Duilearga after first meeting with Seán Ó hÉochaidh on Sliabh Liag, County Donegal in 1935

“I don’t really know why I did it but they certainly are worth having, as the years go on . . . most of the interviewees are now deceased . . . not all.”

Billy Finn - Folklore collector from Ballyshannon

“Documenting the memories and traditions of the GAA in my home county of Donegal for the GAA Oral History Project was fascinating. While many stories had parallels around the country, recording oral histories when you have a shared history and sense of place with your narrators really helps bring their accounts to life. I feel privileged to have been able to help preserve such rich histories detailing not only the GAA, but also the everyday lives of Donegal people and communities in times gone by.”

Dr. Arlene Crampsie - Oral Historian and Collector

“As a child I became acutely aware that when the older generation would pass on, so to would a dearth of oral traditions, stories and folklore. This prompted me to begin in earnest to record and hopefully preserve a rapidly disappearing oral tradition, before it is lost forever.”

Conor Whyte, Ardara - Historian and Collector

“Listening to his own recordings on a Ferograph reel to reel recorder as a child and growing up listening to my father, an Oireachtas prize winner singer of Irish songs at home and visiting the Donegal Gaeltacht often myself, it was natural that I would want to do the same.”

Marcas Ó Murchú, Belfast - Historian and Collector

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my genuine appreciation to the many people who gave significant time and support during this project. Joseph Gallagher, County Donegal Heritage Officer, who has driven this project from its inception as part of the County Donegal Heritage Plan, is deserving of special mention for his oversight, support and clear direction. I also want to thank Dr. Niamh Brennan, Sinéad McLaughlin, Úna Matthewson and Úna McGarrigle for their direct support. The multitude of archives and collections, which I visited and contacted, each had at least one individual behind them whose support and enthusiasm for the project was commendable. To the private collection holders who have spent countless unpaid hours, collecting and caring for their own history, lore and tradition, a depth of gratitude is owed. Generations to come will benefit from your work.

About the Author

The author and consultant on this project, Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara, is an oral historian from Tuamgraney in east Clare. In 2016, he was commended by President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, as one of seven recipients who have made outstanding contributions to culture over the last 100 years for a *Comhaltas Forógra na Cásca* Centenary Award. Since 2004, he has been documenting social memory associated with the Irish revolutionary period. He has published articles on various aspects of folklore and oral tradition and lectured both nationally and internationally on aspects of Irish history, culture and folklore. Between 2008 and 2014 he led the development of the award-winning *Cuimhneamh an Chláir (Memories of Clare)*. As a heritage consultant, he advises national bodies like the Military Archives and Waterways Ireland and has worked on several heritage initiatives across the country. In 2015 he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Limerick for his study into the social memory of the Irish War of Independence and has published two books: *High Prestige: Clare's All-Ireland Victory of 1914* (Clare, 2015) and *Patrick Brennan's Autograph Book - Frongoch 1916* (Clare, 2016). In August 2017, his next book on *The Clare Volunteers and the Mountjoy Hunger Strike of 1917* will be launched. Tomás Mac Conmara can be contacted by e-mail at macconmarat@hotmail.com or by telephone at: (087) 916 0373.

Executive Summary

'The knowledge would be brimming over': A Guide to County Donegal's Oral Recordings is based on information gathered as part of the Audit of Oral Recordings for County Donegal, conducted by the author between September and December 2016. The project addresses Action 4.9 of the County Donegal Heritage Plan which aimed to “Undertake an audit of oral history recording and explore training opportunities.” To better understand the extent of oral recordings across Donegal and relating to the county, an audit of oral recordings held in private collections as well as local, regional and national repositories was initiated by the County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Council. The information from this audit outlines the current extent of oral recordings relating to County Donegal, illuminates the educational and cultural value of the material and identifies the risks they face. It should first be noted that the necessary limitations associated with the project inevitably mean that the audit is not wholly conclusive. Other collection holders not identified in the audit can submit information on their collections to County Donegal Heritage Office for inclusion in future updates of the audit.

Over a period of **12** weeks, from September to December 2016, data was collected relating to **57** collections, from **36** collection holders, with collections totalling **4,081** items. The outputs of the audit are a detailed digital database, hosted by Donegal County Council (www.donegalcoco.ie/heritage), which provides comprehensive information on each identified collection, as well as key collection characteristics for each individual holding. In addition, the audit provided the foundation for this User Guide, which summarises the information gathered. The audit began in mid-September 2016, with the field work running until mid-December. The audit was limited to recorded spoken recollections on physical sound carriers or digital audio files of existing collections within or relating to Donegal folklore, history, tradition, and memory in both the Irish and English language. The project worked according to a multifaceted approach of outreach, promotion and desktop research, in order to bring together information from known and previously unknown oral collections. To ensure as wide a reach as was possible and to enable continued contact and development after project completion, a contact list (including names, locations, relevance and e-mail addresses where available) was compiled. Ninety-seven potential collection

holders were contacted individually by the consultant through letters, e-mails, phone calls and/or combinations of the above. Where possible, existing sources of information were used to gather information on known collections. Holders of these collections were contacted and encouraged to provide further information on the items in their care, according to the Audit Record Form (see page 11). Information (where available) was gathered according to the following agreed fields: Collection Holder, Location, Collection Name, Collection Level Description, Original Format, Current Format, Number of Interviews, Relevant Contact, Collection Catalogue Number, Catalogue Statement, Themes, Copyright, Consent, Use of Material & Sound Quality.

Individualised correspondences with the ninety-seven identified collection holders were relatively successful in generating returns. Public relations, including a widely circulated press release and direct engagement with broadcast media including interviews with the consultant on *Highland Radio*, *Ocean FM*, *Owenea FM* and *Raidió na Gaeltachta*, also elicited responses from the public. Telephone conversations were vital in yielding successful returns as it afforded the opportunity to clarify the nature of the project. In many cases, respondents had understood that the project was seeking to obtain the collected material. In certain cases, this led to a reticence on behalf of the collection holders. However, it is worth noting that a number of holders were happy to submit copies of their material to the project, if that had been sought. With some of the larger potential collection holders, like RTÉ and Raidió na Gaeltachta, the diffuse nature of their material proved difficult to obtain comprehensive information on collections relating specifically to Donegal.

Five field trips were carried out in County Donegal over the period of the project, which saw the consultant spend a total of nine days travelling around the county, meeting with collection holders and documenting material held in archives, libraries and in private holdings. The consultant also spent a number of days in regional and national repositories including Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Department of Folklore, UCD, National Library of Ireland and the offices of Conradh na Gaeilge in Dublin. Given the diverse nature of collection information and the varied approaches of collection holders, it was decided to allow a fluid method of information gathering

to proceed. This was by its nature a more time-consuming approach but was critical in ensuring that individual collectors, in particular, felt comfortable in contributing to the audit.

Key data captured in the audit has been inputted into the database according to agreed fields. While information was expectedly inconsistent across holdings and in many cases was limited, where additional and substantive information was available, this has been hyperlinked within the database. In most cases, collection holders were only able to provide approximate information on their collection as no cataloguing had been undertaken. For individuals and groups operating on a voluntarily basis, significant resources would be required to enable such processing and post-interview work. Many oral history collections identified in the audit face an immediate threat from the degradation of physical media and declining support for older audio formats from today's technology industries. The generation of critical data on a range of collection characteristics within this audit, will better enable the ultimate safeguarding and preservation of same, as well as the provision of a short Red List for Conservation. Crucially, the need and appetite for in-depth training for oral history collectors and groups was noted across the county.

While not wholly comprehensive, the audit offers for the first time a broad and coherent reflection on what has been collected over many decades relating to the oral tradition and folklore of County Donegal. The extent of oral recordings is now more clearly understood, as well as the educational and cultural potential and associated risks. This can form the basis for greater engagement with this material, where possible, and also inform a strategy for preservation and prioritisation over the coming years.

Overview of Results

The audit recorded the following results:

- Over a period of **12** weeks, from September to December 2016, data was collected relating to **57** collections, from **36** collection holders, with collections totalling **4,081** items.
- The majority of collections included were 'Public Collections' in libraries and public archives (**43%**), community group collections (**21%**) and private or individual collectors (**33%**).
- Of the total number of recordings audited **68%** are held on obsolescent 'legacy' formats and require migration to stable digital formats as soon as possible.
- Local folklore, tradition and life stories were the most common subject areas reported by collection holders.
- The majority (**81%**) of responses were received from collection holders based in Donegal. However, significant collections like the National Folklore Collection and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum were based outside of Donegal.
- The majority of collections were reported as being outside of an official consent form process
- Only **27%** of surveyed collections were reported as having digital copies, and **10%** were described as having some digital copies and partially digitised. **57%** of collections were reported as having no digital copies. **6%** of collection holders were uncertain as to the digital preservation status of their collection.

Audit Methodology & Database Layout

In order to ensure that as many collections and recordings as possible were identified, significant time was spent preparing the process of conducting the audit. The following process was agreed with the County Donegal Heritage Office.

Audit Record Form

Created to guide the gathering of information based on agreed fields. This functioned as the basis for an initial contact and select site visits were undertaken to ensure a comprehensive reflection. The database can be accessed on www.donegalcoco.ie/heritage. See below sample fields of County Donegal's Oral Recordings Database.

Collection Holder

What organisation or person currently holds the relevant collection.

Collection Level Description

Description of key characteristics of the collection including background, context, composition, status and pertinent information. Offers a broad insight into the collection.

Original Format

Format the material originally recorded on such as reel-to-reel, cassette tape or born digital.

Current Format

What is the current format of the collection and has it been digitised?

No. of Interviews

This is often an approximate figure. Where possible, the difference between the number of recordings and interviews has been noted as one recording may have multiple interviews.

Collection Cat No

If known, the catalogue or reference number within the relevant archive is noted.

Further Collection Information

This links to additional excel spreadsheets or word documents which carry specific information on the relevant collection. This was compiled by the consultant where that information was accessible.

Consent

A note on the consent process (if any) of the relevant collection.

Use of Material

A note on how and if the relevant collection (or part thereof) has been used in a publication, radio show or documentary.

Contact: Contact details for collection holder, if disclosed and access information.

Note: Each collection of material is different and was collected to different archival standards. As a consequence, there were limits to the consistency of information across multiple collection holdings.

Collection Holders

The overall outreach element was divided into known collection holders and private/community holders. The audit aimed to appeal to stakeholders with large or multiple collections as well as those with small collections, or even one recording relating to County Donegal. Key repositories set out in the brief were broken down according to location for the audit of localised sources in the county (including history societies, libraries, radio stations, museums and private collections). Repositories were explored according to the following three part process: (i) The author undertook exhaustive on-line research to establish a base level of information regarding collections; (ii) Available metadata was inputted to an audit database; and (iii) Direct contact was then made with relevant institutions to confirm the extent of collections and expand on information where possible, with follow-up site visits where necessary. Given the varied nature of information on collections, it was necessary to deal with each collector or collection holder individually. This was very time-consuming but important to ensure the best chance of eliciting and capturing information pertinent to the audit.

Red List for Conservation

In addressing the brief to 'identify priorities for oral history recording and collection', it was anticipated that a pattern would emerge as the audit developed, which could facilitate the prioritisation of collections at risk and the compilation of a provisional 'Red List' (See page 77).

Education Signpost

The audit is valuable in its own right as an audit and inventory. However as a promotional, conservational and educational tool, it can increase awareness of oral heritage in Donegal in an enduringly positive way. In addressing the central aim of creating greater engagement in both identified oral history collections and oral heritage generally, this User Guide will identify the areas of culture, history and folklore or 'Education Signpost' that the identified collections can illuminate, both for the educational sector and broader society in Donegal.

Oral Heritage - Key Terms

The collections identified in this audit, represent a huge expanse of categories, from oral history testimony to inherited tradition and folklore. Given the proliferation of terms associated with the study of memory and history, it was important to foreground and explain terminology pertinent to Donegal oral recordings. Recent scholarship illuminates a wide lexicon relating to memory studies. It is important, therefore, to note the possibility for several strands of memory to exist and intersect, both relating to and within this broader categorisation. The following are key terms relevant to Donegal oral tradition and memory:

Oral History

Oral History relates to the collecting and recording of the memories and experiences of an individual or group. With the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next, oral history enables us to see the human side of historical events, rather than relying solely on books and records. It also allows us to challenge assumptions about our recent past by asking direct questions to people who lived through those times.

Folklore

Folklore relates to traditional tales and stories, fairies, banshees and old folk beliefs in supernatural creatures. It is also family lore, folk songs and music, folk art, pottery and carving. In addition, folklore is the traditions and customs of our families and our communities. It is also expressed as the interest in informal, unofficial, ancestral, indigenous or alternative knowledge or ways of knowing and experiencing the world.

Social Memory

Social memory is understood according to Guy Beiner's definition as a "discursive reconstruction of the past performed and promulgated by multiple agents and relating to numerous participants".¹ Cultural memory which has also been used as a

¹ Beiner's full definition is as follows; "Social memory is collective in so far as it is neither the exclusive property nor the faculty of one individual, but commonly shared by a community. It is the discursive reconstruction of the past performed and promulgated by multiple agents and relating to numerous participants"; See Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), p. 28.

substitute for social memory is defined here according to Kansteiner's categorisation as "ceremonies, images, built heritage, monuments and text".²

Oral Tradition

Oral tradition as a more passive form of memory is important for an appreciation of Donegal's oral recordings. Oral tradition is understood according to Kansteiner who used the term 'communicative memory' to describe the "daily modes of communication in which the past is discussed, debated and given meaning".³ Distinguished from personal testimony, oral tradition was regarded mainly as the domain of folklorists and as such was incorporated in the academic discipline of Folklore Studies from the nineteenth century onwards.⁴ The discipline, both nationally and internationally, gained in credibility over the latter part of the twentieth century.⁵

Mnemonics

A mnemonic device in the context of oral history relates to physical or cognitive triggers which stimulate or sustain memory. In a public sense, monuments, statues, plaques, gravestones and commemorations help to sustain aspects of our past in community memory. Privately, mnemonic devices can range from household items, marks on a wall or known locations which may not have a physical reminder but are known within local memory. In a cognitive sense, songs, poems and stories enable certain accounts to be retained in social memory.

Oral History & the Study of History

Oral history in its broadest sense has a long and contested genealogy.⁶ Recent advances in technology have had a significant impact on the ability of oral historians and collectors to document and interpret information at greater speed and efficiency than previously.⁷ Greater technological capacity as well as the emergence of oral

² Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', in *History and Theory*, Vol. 41 (May, 2002), p. 182.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Larry Danielson, 'The folklorist, the oral historian and local history' in David K. Dunaway & Willa K. Baum (eds.), *Oral History, An interdisciplinary Anthology* (Plymouth: Altamira Press, 1996), p. 188.

⁵ Burke offers an insightful reflection on the coming together of folklore and history since the nineteenth century, See Peter Burke, 'History and Folklore: A Historiographical Survey' in *Folklore* 115 (2004), pp. 134-136.

⁶ Mark Riley & David Harvey, 'Oral histories, farm practice and uncovering meaning in the countryside' in *Social & Cultural Geography*, Volume 8 (Issue 3, 2007), p. 392.

⁷ Donald A. Ritchie, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 287-288.

history as a credible academic discipline has led to its application across a range of subject areas and in particular a greater attention to the notion of a 'history from below'.⁸ Although practiced since the time of the ancient Greeks, the collection of eye-witness testimonies to major historical events in the context of modern Irish history has been in existence for many centuries. For example, signed statements of testimony were collected from Protestants who lived through the 1641 rebellion as a way of documenting and communicating that experience.⁹ In addition, in Musgrave's *Memoires of the Irish Rebellion of 1798*, first published in 1801, the author accumulated a vast collection, albeit with a strong loyalist bias, of oral as well as documentary evidence from eye witnesses to the rebellion of 1798.¹⁰ Much of the early work was archival in nature and it was not until the 1970s that its potential to reveal hidden histories led to an expansion in interest and output.

⁸ Robert Perks & Alistair Thomson, (eds.), *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 1.

⁹ Eamon Darcy, *The Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* (Suffolk: Royal Historical Society, 2013), p. 213.

¹⁰ Thomas Bartlett, Kevin Dawson & Daire Keogh, *The 1798 Rebellion, an illustrated history* (Dublin: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1998), p. 6.

Reflection on Oral Heritage & County Donegal

Oral history, as both a method and resource, has the capacity to significantly deepen understanding on aspects of our past. From Thomas Crofton Croker in the nineteenth century to Douglas Hyde and Lady Gregory in the early twentieth century, the gravitation of folklore collectors to counties like Donegal has underlined two important realities. Firstly, counties like Donegal host a vibrant oral tradition and rich cultural inheritance.¹¹ Secondly and perhaps more importantly, collection was driven by a realisation that aspects of traditional heritage were being lost. For the future user of the material, this means that you are engaging with material that, without the efforts of those who collected, would have been lost irretrievably.

As a largely rural Irish county, with a strong fishing tradition, island communities and with over 25% of the entire Gaeltacht population of Ireland, County Donegal represents the characteristics associated with a 'traditional county'. Its selection as one of the key study areas for the Irish Folklore Commission in the 1930s, demonstrated its richness as a source for lore and tradition. Recent legislation has underlined the increasing realisation of its importance. For example, the Landscape Character Assessment for County Donegal identified the relevance of oral history in underlining the human history of the county. Additionally, the Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2016 -2022 (Action 3.3.5) identified the priority "To support local communities and individuals in the collection of the folklore and oral history in relation to the North west region".¹²

Although well-known collectors like Caoimhín Ó Danachair, Liam McMeanman and Máirtín Ó Cadhain, spent considerable time in Donegal, much of Donegal's traditional lore was collected through the efforts of Donegal native Seán Ó hEochaidh. In attempting to illuminate the depth of lore within County Donegal as well as the value in its documentation, the life of Ó hEochaidh offers an optimal lens.

¹¹ 'Banshees, fairies and leprechauns - Donegal's folklore, part of what we are', *Donegal Democrat*, 14 May, 2012.

¹² Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan 2016-2022: Volume 2 (Lifford: Donegal County Council, 2016), p. 27.

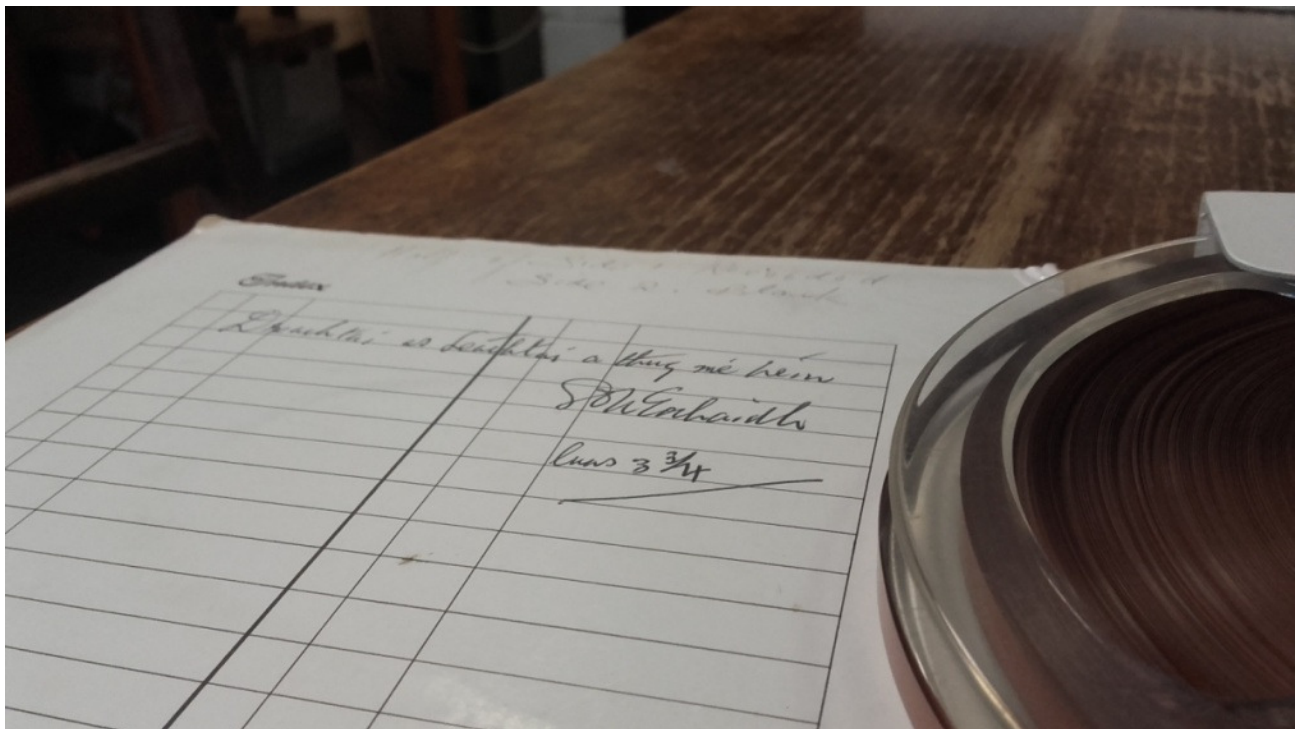
Seán Ó hEochaidh

Seán Ó hEochaidh, born in February 1913, was a native of Teelin, County Donegal. Ó hEochaidh worked as a fisherman in his youth and began at a young age to make a written record of the oral folklore of his area. In 1935, Seamus Ó Duilearga of the Irish Folklore Commission appointed Ó hEochaidh as full-time folklore collector for the Gaeltacht area of Donegal. Ó hEochaidh recorded stories and songs on wax cylinders and on a 56 lb Ediphone, considered by some who were unfamiliar with the technology of the time, as 'the work of the Devil'. Ó hEochaidh is estimated to have spoken with at least 1,500 people and is believed to have amassed the largest collection of Irish folklore ever compiled by one individual.



Dr. Séan Ó hEochaidh
(Courtesy of National Folklore Collection)

In the 1960s, he guest lectured at Queen's University, Belfast, in the Celtic Department and later, with the dissolution of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1971, he joined the Department of Irish Folklore at University College, Dublin. In 1995, he was named Donegal Person of the Year. One of Ó hEochaidh's most famous published works was an autobiography of his father-in-law, Micí Mac Gabhann (1865–1948), published in 1959 as *Rotha Mór an tSaoil* and later translated by Valentin Iremonger as *The Hard Road to Klondike* (1973).¹³ In 2002, a documentary *An Scéalaí Deireanach? / The Last Storyteller?*, featured interviews with Seán in the last years of his life, retelling some of the uncanny stories he recorded, and reflecting on what is lost in our culture with the end of traditional storytelling. In 1977, *Bealoideas: A People's Past*, a documentary, spearheaded by Joe Mulholland, celebrated the life and work of Ó hEochaidh.



Reel-to-Reel Tape from the Seán Ó hEochaidh Collection at Department of Folklore, UCD (Author's Collection)

¹³ Teach Mhicí Mhic Gabhann in the townland of Doire Chonaire is the homestead of Micí Mac Gabhann and can be visited by appointment only. A documentary exploring the life of Micí Mac Gabhann entitled *Micí Mac Gabhann – Rotha Mór an tSaoil* (TG4 RTE) 1973 is available.

A Collection Tradition Continued

In a broader context, County Donegal has remained the focus of researchers, historians and folklorists both within the county and from outside. For example, Jonathan Bell & Mervyn Watson identified the central role of oral evidence in illuminating the role of farming tools and implements in Donegal's history.¹⁴ Others of note include Prionnsias Mac Grianna, Aodh Ó Dómhnaill, Aodh Ó Duibheannaigh, Áine Nic an Leagha, Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald from Inishowen and Pádraig Ó Baoighill from Rann na Feirste. More recently, collectors like Dr. Arlene Crampsie, a native of Donegal, was one of the key collectors and drivers of the Boston College GAA Oral History Project. The project, which was based at Boston College-Ireland, was commissioned by the GAA as part of its 125th Anniversary celebrations. In addition, the future for the collection and preservation of our lore looks bright with committed collectors like Conor Whyte from Ardara taking on the responsibility to preserve the culture of his people and place.

¹⁴ Jonathan Bell & Mervyn Watson, *Heritage Objects associated with Farming & Fishing in County Donegal*, (Lifford: County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Council, May 2011), pp. 8 & 12.

Summary of Consultant's Observations

- The audit offers for the first time a broad and coherent reflection on what has been collected over many decades relating to the oral tradition and folklore of County Donegal.
- There are inevitably more collections relating to Donegal, both within the county and in repositories outside of Donegal, that were not possible to identify within the time and budget constraints of the audit.
- Responses to the audit were hugely positive, with respondents expressing their satisfaction at this County Donegal Heritage Plan initiative.
- There is a clear need for training for collection holders who are interested in continuing or developing the collection of oral heritage. This needs to be of a sufficiently in-depth level to underline and address the key areas of oral heritage from project set-up, through research, collection and archiving.
- Many of the respondents were concerned about the legacy format issue, but do not have the resources to migrate their material to more stable formats.
- The size of the county as well as localised identities militated against a more comprehensive audit.
- A number of collection holders were unaware of the full extent of recorded material. The contents of certain collections (such as the Donegal Folklore Ancestry Project) is unclear due to the inability (and unsafe) replaying of legacy carriers such as reel-to-reel and micro-cassette.
- Uncertainty exists amongst private collection holders with regard to what archive they should donate material.
- There was a striking lack of reference to any monetary value on the collections within private holdings and conversely a significant understanding of their cultural value.
- Given the lack of official consent on so many collections, any initiative to make collections accessible digitally (i.e. on-line) may require a considerable amount of rights-clearance activities.
- The findings of the audit demonstrate strongly the depth of cultural heritage, folklore and tradition within Donegal. It shows also that significant effort has been made to document and preserve that memory over many decades. This is illustrated cogently by the **4,081** recordings identified during the audit, many of which are contained on formats that are under threat from loss and decay.

Resources for Primary, Secondary & Third-Level Educators

An 'Educational Signpost' is provided for each collection in the audit. The engagement of students at all educational levels has multiple, enduring benefits. However, at a primary school level, the material has the capacity to convince young people of the merits of not only the material, but the latent potential in everyday intergenerational relationships. A greater relationship between primary schools and collected oral heritage relating to Donegal will require students to become active participants in their own learning process. It will invite inquiry, stimulate discussion, and transform abstract concepts into concrete reality, focused on sites and locations they see on a regular basis. Material would enable teachers and pupils to explore key aspects of their local history and demonstrate how this can be connected to national history. For teachers, a greater use of collected oral heritage in Donegal fully addresses the aims of the Primary School Curriculum and particularly its emphasis on social, environmental and scientific education (SESE). Crucially, the programme develops the key skills of investigation as well as addressing the curricular aim of exposing pupils to 'the work of a historian'. The overall programme enables development of the following relevant key skills and concepts: time and chronology, change and continuity, cause and effect, using evidence, synthesis and communication, and empathy. The audit will assist also in addressing a number of the key strand units which are included in the history programme including 'Myself and My Family', 'Story', 'Life', 'Society', 'Culture in the Past' and 'Continuity and Change Over Time'.

Structure of Guide

The following chapter provides summarised information on the collections identified in the audit. The summaries are structured according to four main dimensions as follows: **(i) Collection Name:** (if no name was given, the author attributed the collection to the person most closely associated with its care), **(ii) Collection Level Description:** which outlines the broad characteristics of the collection including background, context and subject focus, **(iii) Access & Usage:** which explains the way in which the material has been used since its creation and the level of access to the holding (if any), as well as contact details as provided. **(iv) Education Signpost:** allows a brief comment on the value both culturally and educationally of the relevant collection. The sequence of the collections is arranged alphabetically according to the given title of the collection.

Note on Accessing Collections

Digital Archives

For public archives such as the National Folklore Collection, UCD or Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, access to the material is possible, but only through the decided mechanism of the relevant institution. Usage policies will be dictated by the institution and must be adhered to when accessing or using material.

Private Collections

Contact details have been made available for certain collection holders. However, the audit author or the County Donegal Heritage Office, cannot guarantee access will be granted to these collections.

Consent

It should be noted that with such a high percentage of material generated without an official consent form or consent process, use of the material cannot be fully endorsed. However, a high proportion of collectors indicated that verbal consent was obtained in their collection programmes, which lessens any negative consequence to their use.

Collection Entries

Where collections have the same broad theme and have the same Collection Holder, they have been merged into one entry in the User Guide but have been given their own identifier and entry in the associated database. For example, the Islands' Oral History Project by Mary Phelan has five distinct entries in the database but is reflected in one entry in the User Guide.

Donegal Collections

Anne McMenamin Collection - *When We Were Young* Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/16)

A series of twenty-two interviews taken by Anne McMenamin. Many of the interviewees recall their experiences of emigration and, interestingly, of their return home often after many years abroad. Among the interviewees was Hannah Alcorn, who emigrated to America at the age of seventeen along with her sister Martha. Hannah met her husband Alex in America and they farmed in Iowa until they returned to Ireland in 1936. In the interview, she recalls their work on the farm and their social life among the Irish emigrant community in the USA. Another interviewee, Mr. John Houston, recalls the 'convoys' when the young people went to America and how they would 'dance the night away' before they left. He also recalls how 'very few of them came back.' A further interviewee Mr. Tony McGinley, a War of Independence veteran, emigrated as a young man to California and recalls that he felt encouraged to come home when [Eamon] de Valera 'sent out word' to emigrants - the 'soldiers of destiny' like himself - to return, telling them they would receive land if they did. Another interviewee 'Mary' had begun her career as an emigrant working as a nanny for the writer Patrick MacGill in London.¹⁵

Access & Usage

Excerpts of the interviews were reproduced in Anne McMenamin and Celine McGlynn *When We Were Young*, (Donegal, 2000). The interviews are lodged with Donegal County Archives (Collection Number: P/65) and consists of 38 individual CDs. Accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives

Education Signpost

Most of the interviewees were born between 1900 and 1915 and come from various parts of County Donegal. Their life stories reflect the timeline of Irish and Donegal history over the twentieth century. Local dialects and sayings add to this by documenting a tone and a poetry that is unique to each person. The interviews reflect on the background and childhood of each interviewee, who their parents were, their schooldays, brothers, sisters, weddings and work. They record the changing face of Ireland, the introduction of electricity, the motor car, two world wars, famine, emigration and political upheavals that still affect us today.

¹⁵ Niamh Brennan & Bernadette Walsh, (eds.), *Across the Atlantic Emigrating from Merville and Derry*, (Donegal County Council and Derry City Council, 2010), p. 67.

Arthur Lynch Collection
Collection Holder: Arthur Lynch

A collection of sixty-three interviews recorded predominantly on film by Arthur Lynch, a videographer operating in Milford. The collection covers a wide range of themes including fishermen, 'the Tankers', Gael day in Milford (as Gaeilge), local names of inlets and headlands, trades and occupations, life stories, rabble fair hirings, hurricane 'Debbie', Rathmullan potato store 1961, weaving in Oughterlin, Mc Mahon's of Milford (garage), Stewarts of Kerrykeel (hardware shop), Drumhalla School reunion 1904 and memories of Rathmullan. Covers geographic areas across predominantly north Donegal including Fanad, Carrigart, Glenvar, Rathmullan, Oughterlin, Milford, Kerrykeel, Drumhalla and Inishtrahull.

Access & Usage

This is a private collection of material. For further information contact:
Arthur Lynch,
Milford,
County Donegal
Website: www.arthurlynchweddings.com

A blue arrow-shaped graphic pointing to the right, containing the text 'Education Signpost' in white.

Education Signpost

Tremendous value as a resource spread across areas of employment and worklife across north Donegal and in particular the localities mentioned above.

Bailiúchán Béaloidis Ghaeltacht Thír Chonail **Collection Holder: Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge**

Bailiúchán Béaloidis Ghaeltacht Thír Chonail (Folklore Collection of the Donegal Gaeltacht) is one of the most extensive, structured and accessible folklore collections in the country. Collected between 2006 and 2011, the collection provides a unique insight into the past in the Gaeltacht region of Donegal, through the memories of 230 interviewees, amounting to 380 hours of audio material. The material was collected almost exclusively through the medium of Irish and is also presented in that language. Dónall 'Dinny' Ó Gallchóir conducted the interviews and was supported by a team of researchers from Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge (NUI Galway).¹⁶ Themes explored include emigration, work, farming, fishing, sport, pastimes, tradition, superstition and daily life. It is also of vital importance for the study of linguistics and for Irish language scholars. The interviews are semi-structured with Ó Gallchóir using a relaxed approach to elicit memory and tradition within the interviews. The interviews are made all the more valuable by the knowledge and skill of Ó Gallchóir.

Access & Usage

All of the audio material is available on <http://bealoideas.com>. The material was digitised, transcribed, catalogued and archived as part of the project, making it one of the most accessible collections in the country. As part of the ordering of material, the fourteen categories, made famous by Seán Ó Súilleabháin of the Irish Folklore Commission were used to structure the material. For further information, contact: Micheál Ó Domhnaill, Feidhmeannach Gaeilge, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Doirí Beaga, Leitir Ceannainn, Contae Dhún na nGall Guthán: (074) 953 1919 R-phost: riarthoir@bealoideas.com

Education Signpost

The collection amounts to over 380 hours of material, exploring themes such as emigration, work, farming, fishing, sport, pastimes, tradition, superstition and daily life. The material is of value to anyone interested in rural and maritime Irish society over the twentieth century. Students of the Irish language will find inherent value in the material as would linguists of any kind. The collection is also instructive to other folklore or oral history collection groups in the context of its approach to dissemination.

¹⁶ Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge was established under the auspices of the National University of Ireland, Galway in 2004, to support the sustainable development of Irish-medium courses, research activity and other services. An tAcadamh works in co-operation with faculties, departments and other university offices to develop the range and number of programmes that are provided through the medium of Irish on campus and in the Acadamh's Gaeltacht centres in An Cheathrú Rua, Carna and Gaoth Dobhair.

Bart Whelan Collection

Collection Holder: Bart Whelan

A collection of at least thirteen digitally recorded interviews conducted in Ardara by local collector Bart Whelan. The collection focused on local elderly people in the Ardara area and the capturing of local knowledge which was in danger of being lost. The collection also includes other material based on Bart's radio show on Owenea FM. The show explored local townlands, history, buildings and businesses. Also includes a collection of old photographs from the Ardara area.

Access & Usage

Edited versions of the recordings were aired on local radio station Owenea FM where Bart presented a historical-themed show exploring local townlands and associated history. For more information, contact:

Bart Whelan,
Ardara,
County Donegal



Education Signpost

The exploration of a townland with its immense richness of lore, history and tradition is a key focal point of this collection. The localisation of the collection is crucial in illuminating the depth of information from one small area. Students exploring local history as well as vernacular architecture, trade, economics and even placenames will benefit from access to this collection of material.

Bernadette Sansom Collection

Collection Holder: Bernadette Sansom

Bernadette Sansom spent over a decade recording older people in Donegal. While working in schools in Glenfin she made some recordings of local residents speaking about their young days, contrasted with more recent times, as part of a local history project. Bernadette also made recordings of people in the Traigheanach area of Lettermacaward. The material was collected in connection with several local projects, including an exploration of knitting in the Rosses, research into local schools and local history projects such as those in Maghera and Glenfin. Sansom recorded local women talking about the cottage knitting industry in 1940s/50s/60s, including Mrs. Annie Gillespie and Ms. Annie Campbell. Bernadette also recorded Mr. Neil Campbell of Dungloe about the crossings on the Gweebarra River made by the women in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth century to transport their knitted garments to the agents in Glenties. In addition, she also made recordings of ninety-year-old Mr. Johnie Carr (about the Derrydruel bands) and of Mr. Josie O'Donnell. Mr. Connie Deveney was also interviewed about the fishing industry from the 1930s - 1950s out of Burtonport and Killybegs.

Bernadette Sansom is a retired teacher from Dublin with a lifelong interest and involvement in local and social history. In 2004 Bernadette was appointed as a Rural Coordinator in schools in Glenfin and was inspired by the Donegal Historical Society Annual Schools' Competition to encourage the pupils in these small rural schools to enter each year.

Access & Usage

The material was collected on a digital recorder and the collector has made transcripts of most of her interviews. Some of Sansom's material has been donated to the Donegal County Archives. For more information on the collection contact:
Bernadette Sansom
E-mail: bernadette_sansom@hotmail.com

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Education Signpost

The material collected by Bernadette Sansom will be of particular interest to people curious about the work life of local people in Donegal over the last century and in particular women in the cottage knitting industry in the mid-twentieth century.

Bernard Mc Devitt Interview

Collection Holder: Josephine O'Donnell

An interview with 94-year-old Bernard Mc Devitt from Frosses, County Donegal undertaken by Josephine O'Donnell at Bernard's home in Rochdale, England in the spring of 2016. The interview evolved out of the interviewer's assertion that it was important to document Bernard's life story. Bernard was born in Frosses on 20th August 1922. His parents were William Mc Devitt, a corn mill owner and his mother was Margaret Harley, who ran a drapery shop in Frosses village. Bernard was the twelfth of fourteen children. In the recording, he describes the harsh times of the 1920s and 1930s and a village full of characters. When the mills went into decline Bernard's father was forced to emigrate to America. The exact details are still clear in Bernard's mind as he recalls on the recording that his father left on 27th April 1927 and never returned. William Mc Devitt died of cancer just four years later on 12th December 1931, aged 50 years. The interview outlines how Bernard's mother was very resourceful and started farming. She raised cattle and fowl on the land where the mills once stood in order to care for the family. The interview also deals with Bernard's decision to leave school at the age of fourteen. He explains how he had been influenced by visits from priests and brothers encouraging vocations to the religious life so Bernard joined the Brothers of St. Alexis, who specialised in nursing. He spent two years in Warrenpoint before being professed at the age of 20 years. Bernard also trained as a nurse in Park Royal, London. However, he decided that religious life was not for him. He recalls he was given £20 after seven years in the Order.

Bernard also explains that he had no difficulty getting work and accepted a position in a hospital in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire. In addition, Bernard has interesting comments on the recording on the experience of working as a male nurse in England during the war years (World War II). He studied to become a psychiatric nurse and also qualified as a nurse tutor, a role he carried out in conjunction with nursing. When his mother was elderly, Bernard took the position of Deputy Matron in Downpatrick, County Down to be near her. Returning to the UK following his mother's death in 1972, he was appointed to the position of Matron in Monsell Hospital. He was also national secretary for Catholic Nurses Guild. Bernard was later nominated as magistrate for the city of Manchester and served on the bench from 1974 to 1992. Religion remains a very important part of Bernard's life and recently he was awarded the Bene Meriente medal, an honour awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for service to the Catholic Church. At the time of writing, Bernard lives in his own home in Rochdale.

Access & Usage

The material has not been used in any public form. For more information, contact:
Josephine O'Donnell
E-mail: josodonnell@gmail.com

Education Signpost

A tremendous insight, through the memory of one man, into the reality of work life, employment, emigration, motherhood, childhood, World War II, nursing, returning home and religion. The interview itself is a strong example of one individual (Josephine O'Donnell) taking the initiative at a personal level to record for the intrinsic sake of documenting memory. This interview will act as a very important contribution to Donegal memory.

Billy Finn Collection

Collection Holder: Ballyshannon Library

A collection of twenty-four interviews, with fifty-six different interviewees, recorded between 1991 and 2008 on VHS by Billy Finn from Ballyshannon. There are also seventeen more general 'event recordings' relating broadly to the history, tradition and folklore of Ballyshannon and surrounding area. The collection consists of interviews relating to farming in the 1940s/1950s, fishing, transport, rural life, GAA, local history and folklore in Ballyshannon. Billy Finn taught in Ballyshannon Vocational School from 1972 to 2000 when the Tech amalgamated with De La Salle College and the Sacred Heart School to form Colaiste Cholmcille, the new secondary community school. He taught there from 2000 until 2008, when he retired. While working in Ballyshannon Vocational School, a video camera was acquired in 1990 and as Transition Year (TY) coordinator, Billy used it to interview local people when the TY students undertook projects issues such as farming, fishing, transport and rural life.

Access & Usage

Although initially recorded in VHS style camera, the interviews have been converted to DVD. Billy donated copies to Ballyshannon Library. Selections of the material were shown to the public in the Abbey theatre as part of 'Ballyshannon 400' in 2013 and during Heritage Week over subsequent years. The website of Aodh Ruadh (Ballyshannon) GAA club makes available a selection of Billy Finn's video recordings relating to various aspects of GAA history and events in Ballyshannon (see http://aodhruadh.org/history/finn_archive.php).

For access to the material, contact:
Ballyshannon Community Library,
Abbey View Office Block,
Main Street,
Ballyshannon,
County Donegal
Telephone: (071) 985 8824
E-mail: ballyshannon@donegallibrary.ie

Education Signpost

The material is of interest to anyone wishing to study or explore themes including the GAA, farming, rural life, cattle dealing, fishing, local history, folklore, emigration, work life and the ESB. The videos have been played as part of Heritage Week in Ballyshannon over the last number of years and have been very popular, indicating their worth as a historical resource.

Boyle Collection, Ardara

Collection Holder: Thomas Boyle

Seven recordings on reel-to-reel which originate in the Greenhouse Bar in Ardara. The reel-to-reel recorder was initially purchased by Tommie Boyle in approximately 1969, after which he and his wife Nancy Boyle (nee McCafferty) used the machine to record music and singing sessions intermittently over the following decades. Tommie and Nancy ran the Greenhouse Bar from the late 1940s to mid-1980s. Some of the recordings are taken from local radio in the early 1970s and also includes a recording of The Dubliners on 25th November 1970.

The reel-to-reel machine was also used to record sessions in the home of Nancy Boyle in Glencoach, Ardara, where local singers and musicians including Frank John McHugh, Liam O'Hagen and the fiddler James Jose McHugh performed. The tune '*The Cliffs of Duneen*' sung by Denis Grindle, was also recorded. Another reel has recordings of Mickey Dogherty playing the tune of '*The Gingerman*' and of John Dogherty playing '*Black Mare of Fianad*' and '*Biddy of Muckros*'. On Sunday 27th July 1969, there was an Ulster Fleadh Ceoil held in Ardara, of which Nancy Boyle is likely to have made recordings. The collection may also hold a recording of a band from Derry, who played in 'The Greenhouse' over that weekend called the '*Jolly Tinker Men*'.

Access & Usage

Due to the format of the collection, it is difficult to clarify the exact content. Information was provided by Thomas Boyle, the son of Nancy and Tommie. It is vital and urgent that this material is digitised as soon as possible. For more information, contact:

Thomas Boyle

E-mail: thomasardara@hotmail.com

Education Signpost

A significant resource, given that the recordings were undertaken in the 1960s and with bands and singers, many of whom have long since passed away. The raw nature of the recordings, which captured the authenticity of local music and singing is a key element to the value of this collection.

RED LIST: This collection has been identified as in critical need of digitisation.

Burt GAA Collection

Collection Holder: Dónal Campbell

(This collection is extracted from original material generated in 1966, which is currently housed at the Department of Folklore, UCD)

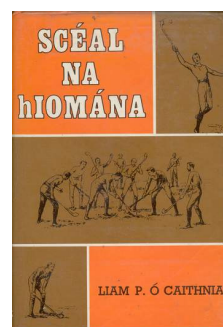
A set of three oral recordings originally conducted in 1966, as part of research into hurling across the country by the GAA historian Liam P. Ó Caithnia.¹⁷ Information from the three interviews was extracted from the original material by John McCafferty, in support of the research for *Against the Grain: A history of Burt, its people and the GAA*, compiled and edited by Dónal Campbell, Damian Dowds and Damien Mullan and published in 2000. The Burt interviewees included: Hughie Whoriskey, James Whoriskey and John Gallagher. Both James and John were born in the 1880s and so could offer rich oral tradition on hurling in the nineteenth century in the Burt area of Donegal. It was James Whoriskey however, who provided most of the information to Brother C.I. Gallagher, who presumably carried out the interviews on behalf of Liam Ó Caithnia for *Scéal na hIomána, ó Thosach ama go 1884*. However, all three men were identified as “GAA stalwarts in the area”.¹⁸ The men were interviewed in their own homes in Burt, seemingly separately. According to one of the authors of *Against the Grain*, Donal Campbell, Brother Gallagher may have been a native of Donegal and quite possibly known in the Burt area, which would have made him a likely delegate for Liam Ó Caithnia. The interviews were recorded on 'spool tape' or reel-to-reel, which would have been the predominant recording device of the time.

Access & Usage

When researching the book *Scéal na hIomána*, John McCafferty volunteered to try and track down the original Burt recordings in order to use some of the material for the publication. The Burt related material was transcribed and used in full in *Against the Grain*. For further information, contact:

Dónal Campbell

E-mail: donal@inishowenindo.ie



Education Signpost

The original material was indexed and accessible, according to the late John McCafferty but its exact location has not been determined. It was pointed out by the collection holder, that only a percentage of the recorded material relating to Burt hurling was actually used in *Scéal na hIomána*. This underlines the significant benefit to the material's use in *Against the Grain* by Campbell, Dowds and Mullan. Without its use in the latter, this material may never have been made public. This is a common reality with the use of recorded material and highlights the potential benefit of greater access to collected oral recordings.

¹⁷ The original recordings were done as part of the research into *Scéal na hIomána, ó Thosach ama go 1884* by Liam P. Ó Caithnia, a book which has been described as 'a bible for followers of hurling'. Ó Caithnia was a Christian Brother, born in Cork City in 1925. He died in 2001.

¹⁸ Correspondence, Dónal Campbell to author, 21 January 2017.

Cary Meehan Collection
Collection Holder: Cary Meehan

A collection of twenty-three interviews collected by historian and author Cary Meehan since c. 2006 in the Dunfanaghy and Creeslough areas of County Donegal. The material explores a range of themes including histories of the local schools and general local history, like Dunfanaghy Workhouse. The recordings were initially conducted on tape recorder and later through the use of a digital voice recorder.

Access & Usage

The material has been transcribed in the main, with some early recordings no longer playable. The material (with Meehan's other extensive research) will form the basis of an upcoming publication on the town of Dunfanaghy. Meehan has published previously on the life of local ballad master Davey Hay in *'The Story of Davey Hay'*.

For more information contact:

Cary Meehan,
The Old School,
Kilmackilloo,
Creeslough,
Letterkenny,
County Donegal

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Education Signpost

Of significant value for those interested in the local history of Dunfanaghy, Creeslough and surrounding areas. Also important as an approach to local and project specific research, which Meehan has undertaken for many years.

Conor Whyte Collection

Collection Holder: Conor Whyte

A collection of fifteen interviews undertaken by Conor Whyte, a historian and folklore collector from Ardara. The collection relates to a series of themes which include, farming, fishing, genealogy, rural life from the 1920s to present day, placenames and society. Some of the material was created in digital form but earlier recordings were made on micro-cassettes. Conor is one of the most active oral historians in Donegal and has already dedicated a considerable part of his life to preserving the history and lore of his people.

Access & Usage

The material is currently being transcribed and can be accessed by contacting the collection holder. There are some restrictions on the material but it is hoped in time that it can be made publically accessible. For more information contact:

Conor Whyte,
Ardara,
County Donegal
E-mail: conorwhytehist@gmail.com

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Education Signpost

The Conor Whyte Collection will be of interest to any scholar of local history and folklore, particularly in a rural context. While it is based in Ardara in south Donegal, the information will be relevant to students of life in Donegal and generally from the 1920s to more recent times.

Dialect Survey of Ireland: Donegal
Collection Holder: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

Sixty recordings relating to Donegal that were made as part of a dialect survey of Ireland. The project was conducted in the late 1950s under the direction of the well-known folklorist Dr. Richard Hayward and Mr. G. B. Adams of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club. The collection in Donegal was part of a wider attempt to compile an Ulster Dialect Dictionary. Material was collected across Ulster and from Ulster descendents living in different parts of the world. Specific attention was paid to pronunciation and distribution of the dialect words within the northern province of Ireland.

Contemporary descriptions of the project explained its relevance to Donegal: "Apart from this historical and linguistic-geographical relevance, the Ulster dialects have features of interest to general linguistics, especially those which arise from the creative interaction of two widely divergent language types, viz., Celtic and Germanic, which started on the east coast of Great Britain some 1500 years ago and which is still a vital issue in the Gaeltacht of County Donegal today."¹⁹

Access & Usage:

Limited due to data protection. For more information, contact:

Peter Carson,
Audio Technical Officer,
National Museums Northern Ireland
Cultra,
Holywood,
County Down,
BT18 0EU

Website: <http://nmni.com/uftm>



Education Signpost

When released, the material in the Dialect survey of Ireland relating to Donegal, would be of tremendous interest to linguists and linguistic geographers from across the world. The material will also add to a deeper understanding of the changing nature of dialects within Donegal and feed into a better appreciation for the nuances of dialects within the county. There will also be a historic importance to the information recorded, although not the central aim of the project.

¹⁹ <http://www.libraryireland.com/gregg/ulster-dialect-survey.php#n1>

Dónal Mac Polín Collection

Collection holder: Department of Folklore, UCD

Historian and collector Dónal Mac Polín recorded nineteen older fishermen in Inishowen in the 1980s and 1990s, as part of his in-depth research into the history and use of the 'Norway yawl' called a 'drontheim' around most of the north for 200 years. Mac Póilin published the research as a book in 1991 and again in 1996 entitled *The Drontheim: Forgotten sailing boat of the north Irish Coast*. The book is out-of-print but a copy can be viewed at the Donegal County Library. Mac Polín, also worked on *Traditional Boats of Ireland, History, Folklore and Construction*, a large research project and publication in 2008 (edited by Dr. Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh).

Access & Usage

The collection (and associated photographs) are now archived in the National Folklore Collection in UCD. The recordings formed the basis of the 1991 publication *The Drontheim: Forgotten sailing boat of the north Irish Coast*. They can be viewed at in the National Folklore Collection in UCD by appointment:

National Folklore Collection,
Newman Building,
University College Dublin
Telephone: (01) 716 8216
Website: www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore

Education Signpost

The material collected by Dónal Mac Polín is of tremendous value to scholars of maritime heritage broadly and of particular interest to those exploring traditional boats and fishing in the northern coast of Ireland. The material provides insight into the building traditions, life on the coast of Ireland, fishing and the unique skills and knowledge required to survive as fishermen and boat builders along the northern coast of Ireland.

Donegal Folklore Ancestry Project
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives

A significant collection of 170 uncatalogued micro-cassettes, which seem to relate to a Donegal Folklore Ancestry Project undertaken circa 1994. The material seems to relate to life stories of a significant number of interviewees from across County Donegal.

Access & Usage:

The collection is housed in the Donegal County Archives (OH/15). There are a number of components to the collection. The collection is not currently accessible due to its format (micro-cassettes) and should be digitised as soon as resources allow. The collection can be accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives



Education Signpost

Such a significant collection of folklore, recorded in the early 1990s, inevitably contains a rich resource of information and knowledge relating to Donegal's past from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. The material will also be instructive with regard to the changing nature of society in County Donegal as viewed by the people interviewed.

RED LIST: This collection has been identified as in critical need of digitisation.

Donegal GAA Oral History Collection

Collection Holder: GAA Museum, Croke Park

Twenty-four recorded interviews conducted as part of the official GAA Oral History Project. The project, based during the collection phase at Boston College-Ireland, was commissioned by the GAA as part of its 125th anniversary celebrations. The project, which finished in 2012, aimed “to record the fullest possible picture of what the GAA has meant to Irish people, in their own words”. Oral historian Dr. Arlene Crampsie, a native of County Donegal, was central to the work in the county, which ultimately saw twenty-four contributions from Donegal people across the entire county. Interviewees range from young and old and from people still living in Donegal and natives of the county who had emigrated. They reflect on the background, playing careers (where relevant) and the importance of GAA in their respective lives.

Access & Usage

All interviews were digitally recorded and have been processed to best practice standards. While the Boston College Project officially ended in 2014, the entire collection has been handed over to the GAA Museum at Croke Park. Some of the material is reflected by quotations on the Boston College website and has formed the basis of publications by Boston College academics including Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan, Paul Rouse, *The GAA: County by County* (Dublin, 2011). There is some information on the Boston College website including an on-line exhibition and a county by county page.²⁰

According to the archives section of the GAA Museum in Croke Park, the material will be accessible on-line before the end of 2017. For more information, see: <https://crokepark.ie/gaa-museum-tours/gaa-museum/library-and-archive>

Education Signpost

The collection provides a deep insight into the central role of the GAA for many people in Donegal and for Donegal people living abroad. Given the close cultural connection between the GAA and many other facets of Irish life, the collection is of broader relevance to students of Irish social and cultural life in the twentieth century also.

²⁰ http://www.bc.edu/centers/irish/gaahistory/Previous_Themes/CountyByCounty/Donegal.html (accessed 14 November 2016)

Donegal Heritage 'Life & Lore' Collection

Collection Holder: Central Library

The Donegal Heritage 'Life & Lore' Collection was launched by Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh of Altan & Donegal Person of the Year in May 2010. The collection of 64 CDs of oral recordings tells part of the story of County Donegal through the lives, and in the words, of some of its residents. These diverse accounts of life, heritage and culture in County Donegal were recorded by Maurice O'Keeffe and make an important contribution to capturing our sense of place. The Donegal Heritage 'Life & Lore' Collection was commissioned by the County Donegal Heritage Office, Cultural Services, the County Donegal Heritage Forum and The Heritage Council as part of the County Donegal Heritage Plan.

Access & Usage

Copies of the collection are available to consult free-of-charge through the County Library Service. A copy of the collection is also available at Donegal County Archives. An on-line catalogue of the collection is available on the County Donegal Heritage Office website at: www.donegalcoco.ie/heritage

For further information, please contact:

Central Library,
Oliver Plunkett Road,
Letterkenny,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 912 4950
E-mail: central@donegallibrary.ie

Education Signpost

The 'Life & Lore' series operated on a life-story basis and captures reflective accounts of identified or nominated individuals. While not technically detailed or comprehensive, the interviews do contain significant memory on a variety of dimensions of Donegal life in the past. As a catalogued collection, the material is accessible and should be utilised by historians and scholars as a contribution to knowledge on Donegal's past.

ESB Archives Collection

Collection Holder: ESB

A collection of oral history recordings relating to the rural electrification of Inishowen and oral histories of employees from Ballyshannon/Erne Station. Interviewees include Sean Meade, Patrick McGee, Willie McLaughlin and Tom Gallagher. ESB Archives was formally established in 1991 and collects, preserves and makes accessible the history of the ESB. The collection aims to reflect “the unique contribution the ESB has made to the economic and social development of Ireland”. The website (www.esbarchives.ie) provides a virtual archives experience outlining ninety years of the ESB’s rich heritage of innovations and showcases digitised content from paper and audio-visual collections preserved in the ESB Archives.

Access & Usage

To access the material, contact:
Deirdre McParland,
Senior Archivist,
ESB Archives,
Parnell Avenue,
Harold’s Cross,
Dublin 12
D12 TD76
Telephone: (01) 604 2132
Website: www.esbarchives.ie

Education Signpost

In June 1946, in advance of the Erne Hydro-Electric Scheme near Ballyshannon, a survey was carried out in order to document the archaeological monuments, vernacular buildings, folklore and placenames of the area that would be affected. Shortly after completion of the field work, a report was compiled that contained descriptions and photographs of the archaeological monuments and vernacular buildings, as well as some drawings. Material collected in relation to the folklore of the area was submitted to the then Irish Folklore Commission.²¹ The material collected by ESB will illuminate further aspects relating to these significant developments for Ballyshannon, including the economic impact, worklife and the cultural influences of migrant workers.

²¹ Christian Corlett, 'The 1946 Survey of the Area Flooded by the Erne Hydro-Electric Scheme, Co. Donegal', in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, Vol. 136 (2006), pp. 50-98.

Finn Valley Community Radio Interview
Collection Holder: Finn Valley Community Radio

One interview with 100-year-old Ruby Druce, recorded on Saturday 29th October 2016 by Martin Harran of Finn Valley Community Radio. Harran interviewed 100-year-old Ruby Druce, a lady with unbelievable recall, who reminisced about growing up in Castlefinn and life around the Finn Valley and how it has changed since her younger years.

Access & Usage

The interview was available in the immediate aftermath of its airing on finnvalleyfm.com. For further information, contact:
www.finnvalleyfm.com

A blue arrow-shaped graphic pointing to the right, containing the text 'Education Signpost' in white.

Education Signpost

The interviewee recalls a range of experiences and memory which parallels the development of the Irish state since its inception in 1922. Ruby speaks of the many changes she has seen in her local area. It is of immense benefit to any student of Irish history and illuminates the value of older people like Ruby in narrating our history with greater depth and emotional experience.

Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald Collection (1)

Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/14)

A significant collection of material documented by, or relating to, Fr. Jackie (or John) Fitzgerald, a published author, broadcaster and historian who was born in Inishowen. The collection amounts to 632 cassette tapes recorded by Fr. Fitzgerald (predominantly during the late 1980s). Most are of Fr. Fitzgerald himself, speaking on various historic issues including Mass Rocks, Arranmore Tragedy (1935), Lough Swilly, The Waterloo Priest, The Story of Doe Castle, Good Friday Veneration of the Cross, Mass Rock in the Glen, John Charles McLaughlin, Churchill, Sir Cahir O'Doherty's Sword, Dedication of St. Columba's Holy Well, Donegal and the Spanish Armada, the O'Dohertys and historical tours Inishowen. There are also recordings of various funerals, baptisms and weddings at which Fr. Fitzgerald officiated. In addition, there are a considerable number of tapes which are taken from the Dannie Sharkey Show on Highland Radio, in which Fr. Jackie was a guest speaker.

Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald (1929 - 1990), was a published author, broadcaster and historian. He was born in Bunrana, County Donegal and educated firstly at the National School, Bunrana, then at St. Columb's College, Derry and finally at the Presentation College, Bray, County Wicklow where he studied for the priesthood. He was ordained on 4th June 1954 for the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas, USA. Among his publications was *The Mass Rocks of Inishowen*. He died on 16th August 1990 and was buried in Cockhill Cemetery, Bunrana. The Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald Memorial Award as part of the annual Donegal Historical Society's Schools' Competition was named in his honour.

Access & Usage

Four archival standard box files of cassette tapes (marked 'John Fitzgerald cassettes') with material collected by, or relating to, Fr. Jackie (or John) Fitzgerald. The material was donated to Bunrana Public Library and has since been deposited at the Donegal County Archives, Lifford, County Donegal. The material may not be accessible in its current format. For more information, make an appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives

Education Signpost

The collection is a treasure trove of memory, tradition and history. It is of value to the scholar of local history and folklore, to the student of oral history as both a method and resource and to those exploring religious practice and spirituality.

RED LIST: This collection has been identified as in critical need of digitisation.

Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald Collection (2)

Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives

Forty-seven cassette tapes of material collected by, or relating to, Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald. They seem to relate to the major collection, currently housed at Bunrana Library. Themes include 'A Guide to Inishowen', Friar Hegarty's Mass Rock, The Ardagh Chalice, Lough Swilly Railway, The Fort Dunree Military Museum, Carndonagh, Bunrana, Tory Island, St. Colmcille's Heritage Centre, Fahan Abbey Castle, Commodore John Barry (Wexford), The Long March to Kinsale, Sir William Augustus Smith, Red Hugh O'Donnell, Glenveagh Gardens, Doe Castle, Donegal's Holy Wells, Armada Wrecks, Donegal Poetry, The Lessons of History, The Green Man - Trees, Tribute to Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald, The Mary Celeste Sea Mystery, St. Columba, The Arranmore Tragedy, The Haunted Attic, Folktales of Donegal Coast, Inishowen Bird Life, Ballymastocker Bay, Fr. William O'Donnell - The Waterloo Priest, Irish proverbs and sayings, the Holy Mass Rock, The Laurentic (1917), The Saldanha Disaster in Lough Swilly, The Cutty Sark, Donegal Churches, The Flight of the Earls and the Sinking of the Audacious.

Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald (1929 - 1990), was a published author, broadcaster and historian. He was born in Bunrana, County Donegal and educated firstly at the National School, Bunrana, then at St. Columb's College, Derry and finally at the Presentation College, Bray, County Wicklow where he studied for the priesthood. He was ordained on 4th June 1954 for the Diocese of San Antonio, Texas, USA. Among his publications was *The Mass Rocks of Inishowen*. He died on 16th August 1990 and was buried in Cockhill Cemetery, Bunrana. The Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald Memorial Award as part of the annual Donegal Historical Society's Schools' Competition was named in his honour.

Access & Usage

The material was donated to Bunrana Public Library and has since been deposited at the Donegal County Archives in Lifford, County Donegal. The material may not be accessible in its current format. For more information, make an appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives

Education Signpost

As with the collection in Bunrana Library, this collection is a treasure trove of memory, tradition and history. It is of value to the scholar of local history and folklore, to the student of oral history as both a method and resource and to those exploring religious practice and spirituality.

RED LIST: This collection has been identified as in critical need of digitisation.

Giblin Collection

Collection Holder: Margaret Giblin

Two cassette tape recordings (c. 2009-2010) of interviews on BBC Radio Foyle with Margaret Giblin and her late husband on Lifford Customs and smuggling in the 1940s.

Access & Usage

This material is privately held but may be donated to an archive at a future date.

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Education Signpost

The folklore regarding smuggling in the 1940s is of increasing interest and with the passing of time has become more openly discussed. The smuggling of goods across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was a significant activity, particularly in the years of World War II or The Emergency, to the frustration of police and customs officials. The testimony of Margaret Giblin and her late husband is therefore critical to a deeper understanding of this activity from a social and cultural perspective.

Guy Barriscale Collection

Collection Holder: Guy Barriscale

A large archive of 136 recordings, collected under various Arts Council-supported reminiscence theatre projects, undertaken by Guy Barriscale (using Le Jeuneas as a pen-name) from 2012 to 2016. The recordings are from various locations across counties Donegal and Tyrone and collected from 2012 to 2016. The material, collected digitally, was reflected in distinct projects including *A Sense of Memory*; *'Fiesta'*, a project on the ballroom of romance in Letterkenny; *I Would Walk These Fields Again*, a piece about Father James McDyer of Glencolmcille; and *Unified*, a musical about the UNIFI factory in Letterkenny, as well as a project on Killybegs.

In the *Sense of Memory* project, over the course of a year, in excess of thirty reminiscence sessions and workshops were delivered by a team of trained facilitators. The workshop participants were groups of elders across Donegal and Tyrone. The project culminated in a theatre production *On the Camel's Hump* (video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tolbW7YKAPw>) and an exhibition, looking at the history of the railways across Donegal. The recordings were collected by Eoghan MacGhiolla Bhrighde, Joe Brennan, Danielle Roelofsen, Nora Kavanagh, Pat Mulkeen, Kate Brown, Patricia McBride and Guy Barriscale. The groups were identified with help from the HSE and the project partners, The Alley Theatre, Strabane and Voice of Older People, Raphoe. The groups involved were as follows:

- The Luncheon Club, St. Johnston and Carrigans Family Resource Centre
- The Friday Group, Volt House, Raphoe
- Cumann Cairdeas, Falcarragh
- Bessie Bell Court, Newtownstewart
- Derg Valley Care Luncheon Club, Castledearg
- Ionad Naomh Padraig, Dobhar
- Merville Active Retirement Group, Serenity House, Merville
- Sion Mills Community Association, Sion Mills
- Strabane and District Women Together Group, Strabane
- Abbey Court Residents, Kilmacrennan

Fiesta was a celebration of the famous Letterkenny Ballroom of Romance, The Fiesta. The recordings were from Guy Barriscale's interviews with musicians, dancers and employees. *Fiesta* opened in An Grianán Theatre for the Earagail Festival in July 2014

(video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI1_mjJHBcw)

The Glencolmcille recordings were collected during Guy Barriscale's research into Father James McDyer. The project culminated in the play, *I Would Walk These Fields Again*, which opened in Halla Mhuire, Glencolmcille in September 2015 (video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_WtCo2IYml)

The UNIFI recordings were collected during sessions with ex-UNIFI employees. UNIFI was Letterkenny's largest employer from 1974 to 2004. *UNIFIED the Musical* was written from the stories and experiences of the participants, and opened in An Grianán for the Earagail Festival in July 2016.

The Killybegs recordings were collected during research for a piece about the fishing community, due for production in 2017.

Access & Usage

Guy Barriscale has utilised the collected material in several theatre productions including *A Sense of Memory*, A Reminiscence Arts Project produced by An Grianán Theatre (see above). This has taken the material to the public in an innovative way. The aim of the project was to “create an intergenerational arts project embracing a theatre production and a visual arts exhibition based on the theories of Pam Schweitzer’s reminiscence practice and which makes a positive contribution to the process of peace and reconciliation in the border areas of Donegal, Tyrone and Derry”. There are 30-year limitations on some of the material collected for the *Fiesta* project. For more information on the collection, contact:

Guy Barriscale,
Theatre Artist in Residence,
An Grianán Theatre,
Port Road,
Letterkenny,
County Donegal
Telephone: (086) 832 6157
Website: <http://www.guylejeune.info>
Facebook: @GuyLeJeune

Education Signpost

As a method of bringing together the arts and memory, the collection is of huge significance, not alone in Donegal but across the island of Ireland. Such a large collection of material also invariably contains insights into aspects of life and society, which were outside the focus of the initial project ideas and offer a tremendous resource for students and those interested in life in the past across County Donegal. In addition, as a method of disseminating collected material and of engaging the public with oral recordings, Barriscale's work is vital.

John Ward - Inishowen Collection

Collection Holder: John Ward

A collection of recorded programmes, conducted in Inishowen in 2009 and based on the Rambling House concept, which according to the associated website “seeks to recreate how our forefathers entertained themselves in days gone by”.²² Headland New Media created the Rambling House, with a six-part series of hour-long programmes on the now closed Inishowen Community Radio and focused on stories and lore about the unique area that is the Inishowen peninsula, as told by some of its most colourful, local characters. The programme was funded by the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland’s Sound and Vision scheme. The series evoked the old Donegal tradition of ceilidhing (or airneál / scoraíocht) in what was known as a rambling house, where people congregated to socialise, tell stories and sing or recite on occasion. Some noted storytellers include the late Bertie Bryce in his house in Inch Island, Inishowen, who relayed amongst other tales, ghost stories on Inch island.

Themes include Living off the land and sea in Malin Head; The Poitín Republic: tales from the Urris hills; Border Tales: the golden age of smuggling; Inishowen’s fiddle tradition; Inishowen’s maritime heritage and Superstition & customs on trial. The team involved in the project include John Ward (producer), Marie McDonald (sound recordist), J.P. Bradley (Rambling Reporter), Tony McLaughlin (Rambling Reporter, writer & researcher) and Seirse Ó Dochartaigh (director).

Access & Usage

The material can be seen on www.ramblinghouse.ie where podcasts of the recorded material are available as well as some associated photographs and images. For further information, contact:

John Ward

E-mail: john@racontour.com

Education Signpost

A fantastic nod to the old Donegal tradition of ceilidhing, Rambling House and its associated recordings tapped into the oral and social culture of Donegal to capture vanishing stories. It is instructive as a method of re-energising culture and also of documenting important aspects of our lore and storytelling heritage.

²² <http://www.ramblinghouse.ie/Homepage.html> (accessed 09 January 2017).

Jonathan Bell & Mervyn Watson Collection

Collection Holder: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

Nine recordings undertaken by Jonathan Bell & Mervyn Watson between 1983 and 1994 relating to farming, fishing and rural life across Donegal. Includes a focus on fish curing in Scotland, blacksmiths, life on Gola Island, creel making and turf cutting. The collection is part of a large archive of material at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, collected under the remit of the Folk and Transport Museum, which was to “Record and preserve the way of life of the people of Northern Ireland, both past and present”. Mervyn Watson and the late Jonathan Bell collected a wealth of material across Ulster (a total of 235 recordings) over many years and were able to collect some oral material in County Donegal in that time.²³

Access & Usage

For more information, contact:

Peter Carson,
Audio Technical Officer,
National Museums Northern Ireland,
Cultra,
Holywood,
County Down,
BT18 0EU
Website: <http://nmni.com/uftm>

Education Signpost

Of interest to anyone exploring the level of change that has come to the agricultural sector and rural life generally in the twentieth century. Although focused on County Donegal and part of a concentration on Ulster, the material is relevant to students from across the country as well as interested individuals. Machinery, mechanisation, social and cultural life in rural Ulster are explored.

²³ Jonathan Bell & Mervyn Watson, *Heritage Objects associated with Farming & Fishing in County Donegal*, (Lifford: County Donegal Heritage Office, Donegal County Council, May 2011), p. 53.

Killybegs Archive

Collection Holder: Tony O'Callaghan

A collection of 61 recordings completed over a number of years in the mid-1990s as part of a FÁS project and spearheaded by local historian Tony O'Callaghan. The material was initially collected on VHS and subsequently digitised. The aim of the project was to get local people to tell their own life stories under the headings:

- Fishing and Related Topics (such as net making and fish processing).
- Donegal Carpets Ltd.
- Tourism College (This premises was built as an Industrial School and was subsequently used as an army barracks during World War II, a refugee centre after the war and a TB Sanatorium. People were located for interview under all of these headings).

A total of more than 300 hours of raw video was recorded. As well as face-to-face interviews, there were 'cut-away shots' of Killybegs town and harbour, fisheries exhibitions, boats working at sea, the carpet factory and the Tourism College. Old photographs were also sourced and videoed. In the carpet factory, original patterns were recorded. The breakdown of interviews across the themes identified are as follows: fishing and related (30), carpet-making (12), industrial school (2), army barracks (4), refugee centre (2), TB sanatorium (6) and tourism college (7).

Access & Usage

For more information, contact:

Tony O'Callaghan,

Killybegs,

County Donegal

E-mail: tonyocpr@gmail.com

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Education Signpost

As a focused exploration of local history and experience, this collection offers a deep insight into various dimensions of life in Killybegs. It is unusual for a collection from this period to have been so focused and targeted on set themes. As a result of this considered approach, the material is of interest to those who wish to explore in detail and depth the themes outlined above.

Marcas Ó Murchú Collection

Collection Holder: Various

Marcas Ó Murchú is an Irish woodwind flute player from Belfast and in 2013, was appointed the 'Chief Bard of Irish Music'. Since the 1970s, Ó Murchú has collected a hugely significant store of tradition, memory and heritage (approximately 3,000 - 3,500 hours) related broadly to Irish music, language and culture. This was done on a wholly voluntary basis and over recent years. Ó Murchú has donated this material, together with carefully prepared catalogues, to various archives outlined below. Most of the material was initially collected on cassette tapes and later digitised before their deposition in various archives like Linenhall Library, Ulster Library and Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Ó Murchú's material was positively received in each institution as a significant contribution to Irish culture and heritage. For example, the Marcas Ó Murchú Irish Language, Music and Culture Archive, which features recordings of interviews compiled over a forty-year span in, and about, the Irish language was donated to Linenhall Library, Ulster Library. It is planned to make this digitised archive available in Magee Library, not just for the academic community, but for the public in the north-west who wish to listen to this unique resource.

Access & Usage

For more information on the collections of Marcas Ó Murchú contact the following:

Linen Hall Library

17 Donegall Square North,
Belfast,
BT1 5GB
Northern Ireland
E-mail: info@linenhall.com

Ulster Library through: www.library.ulster.ac.uk

Ulster Folk and Transport Museum

Peter Carson, Audio Technical Officer
National Museums Northern Ireland,
Cultra, Holywood,
County Down,
BT18 0EU
Northern Ireland
Website: <http://nmni.com/uftm>

Irish Traditional Music Archive

Grace Toland (Director),
73 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2
Telephone: (01) 661 9699

What is believed to be the biggest collection of traditional Irish and Gaelic singing recorded by any one person was donated by Ó Murchú to the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) in Dublin. Much of it is from the northern part of the country and

Donegal. It has over 800,000 words of a catalogue and is still a work in progress in 2016 but is hoped to be launched in the not-too-distant future. The material was collected from the 1970s to the 2000s and centres on music and the Irish language, largely based on Donegal. It represented 1,200 hours of material, 200 of which relates to radio programmes.

Forbairt Feirste

Jake MacSiacais,
An Nasc,
199 Bóthar na bhFál,
An Cheathrú Ghaeltachta,
Béal Feirste,
BT12 6FB
Telephone: (028) 9043 8597
E-mail: jake@forbairtfeirste.com

Marcas Ó Murchú also presented a 60,000-word catalogue accompanying his priceless collection on Belfast Gaels, which also connects to Donegal. Ó Murchú bestowed a collection of 400 hours of tapes which he has recorded of Belfast Irish speakers at various events and functions. For over forty years Marcas faithfully recorded priceless material at various events in the life of the Belfast Irish-speaking community, between sessions in Cumann Chluain Ard, the first establishment of Irish Medium Education on the Falls Road, the early days of the Shaws Road Gaeltacht, social nights and much else besides. Many of the people recorded learned Irish in Donegal in the 1940s-1970s. Accepting the collection, Sean Mistéil, Chair of Forbairt Feirste said that the people of the Falls were now custodians of a priceless collection which would now be preserved in the Living Gaelic Archive.

For further information, contact:
Marcas Ó Murchú
E-mail: turasceoil@hotmail.com

Education Signpost

Such a large amount of varied material will have significant educational potential across a broad demographic and audience. Linguists, traditional music enthusiasts as well as folklorists will all benefit from this material. The collection of such a breath of material by one individual is fascinating from the perspective of the collector and the archivist. The fact that this was done entirely on a voluntarily basis should not be forgotten and underlines the commitment of Ó Murchú to Irish culture and tradition.

Note: Ó Murchú also voluntarily collected over 200 hours of material related to fishing based on lectures and interviews with for example, John Ghráinne Ó Duibheannaigh from Rann na Feirste. He also noted to the author that "Because of my local connection with west Donegal, I also wanted to donate to Acadamh na hOllscoile, Gaoth Dobhair a copy of the digital video voice recordings I had made at Irish language events over the years, so I gave them over 200 hours of original material never before seen, recorded by me at Éigísí and lectures mostly in Irish".²⁴

²⁴ Correspondence, Marcas Ó Murchú to author, December 2016.

Margaret Farren Collection
Collection Holder: Margaret Farren

Over the ten years that the McGlinchey Summer School was operating, Margaret Farren made a significant number of recordings of local people. While the project was undertaken at a personal level and initially to capture information for her own research, Margaret is examining the potential of securing releases to make the material available to the public. Farren utilised the themes explored in the well-known publication *The Last of the Name* (edited by Brian Friel) and sought information on issues such as schooldays, religion and church observances, farming practices, folklore and fairies, and emigration. The majority of interviewees were from Inishowen and Clonmany. The interviews were recorded between 1997 and 2008 on tape recorder, dictaphone and later digital mini-disk.

Access & Usage

The material is currently restricted but transcripts have been made for each.

For further information, contact:

Margaret Farren

E-mail: margidfarren@gmail.com

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Education Signpost

An important insight into the McGlinchey Summer School and those who attended the event over the that decade. The summer school was named after Charles McGlinchey, a weaver and storyteller, whose memories were chronicled by Patrick Kavanagh and later edited by Brian Friel, who published them in *The Last of the Name*.

Mary Phelan - 'Home from Home' Collection
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/2)

A series of oral history recordings with interviews undertaken in 2006, conducted by Mary Phelan (Sound Woman Productions) with Joe Ferry and Lee Dong family; Jimmy Campbell and Bertha Ostrovka. The material was broadcast on Highland Radio during October and November 2006, in a feature entitled *Home from Home*. The collection was conducted in the winter of 2006.

OH/2/1: The Meehans

OH/2/2: Jimmy Campbell and Bertha Ostrovka

OH/2/3: Joe Ferry and Lee Dong family

Access & Usage

The material is housed at Donegal County Archives (Collection Number: OH/2) and may be accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal

Telephone: (074) 917 2490

E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie

Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives



Education Signpost

The material collected by the late Mary Phelan illustrates the value of oral history as a method of capturing diverse experience and in showing the commonalities of historical experience through the memories of new communities who have moved into Ireland.

Mary Phelan: Islands' Oral History Project

Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/1, OH/8, OH/9, OH/10, OH/12)

Oral history project commissioned by Donegal's Library Service and conducted in 2003 by producer, the late Mary Phelan. The aim of the project was to gather as much of the oral history of Donegal's depopulated islands as possible. Interviews were conducted on Gola, Inis Caoragh, Owey, Rutland and Inishboffin. The islanders who were interviewed by producer Mary Phelan spoke on many topics including their experiences of emigration. Interviews include Sr. Helen Kelly from Glenties and Kevin Sharkey.

Islands included Inis Oirthir, Inis Caoragh, Inishboffin and Inishfree.

- **Inis Oirthir:** Interview with Tadhg McCullough, one of the last surviving residents of Inis Oirthir. Interviews were taken by Gerard Skehan, Traditional Buildings Officer with Donegal County Council on 28th October 2008. Note: Also spelt Inis Oirthear, Inishirrer and Inisherrer
- **Inis Caoire:** Interviews with the residents of Inis Caoire taken by Mary Phelan (Sound Woman Productions) for Highland Radio on 17th March 2010.
- **Inishboffin:** Inishboffin Programme 2 (April 2009), produced for Highland Radio and aired on Easter Monday 2009.
OH/10/2(1): 'Field Recordings, Mickey Ferry, Recorded Summer 2008'
OH/10/2(2): 'Field Recordings, Mickey Ferry 2 Recorded Summer 2008'
OH/10/2(3): 'Field Recordings, Jimie (?) Ferry, Kathleen Lafferty, Tony Smith'
- **Inishfree:** Raw material for Oilean programme interview with Madge and Phil O'Donnell, first recorded in 2008.

Access & Usage

The material is housed at the Donegal County Archives (Collection Number: OH/1, OH/8, OH/9, OH/10, OH/12). Associated Log Sheets for Island Project available in Mary Phelan File at Donegal County Archives - Summary of each track. Note: A transcript of the interview with Tadhg McCullough is also available at Donegal County Archives. Accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives

Education Signpost

Hugely important for scholars of island life, customs, tradition and history. Those exploring cultural, linguistic and historic dimensions of island life both in County Donegal and generally should access this material.

Mary Phelan - O'Donnell Ole - Oral History Collection
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/6)

Material based on a radio programme broadcast in 2008 on *Highland Radio* of Vincent O'Donnell's visit to sites in Europe tracking the journey the Earls of Tyrconnell and Tyrone took in 1607-08 and the significance of the Spanish side of the family. The material was generated by Mary Phelan of *Sound Woman Productions*

Access & Usage

The material is housed at Donegal County Archives (Collection Number: OH/6).

Accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,

Donegal County Archives,

Three Rivers' Centre,

Lifford,

County Donegal

Telephone: (074) 917 2490

E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie

Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives

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Education Signpost

Of interest to scholars of Irish history in the seventeenth century and, in particular, the role played by the O'Donnell family and Donegal during this period.

Mary Phelan - The Rabble - Hiring Fairs Recordings
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/3)

Recordings undertaken in 2007 by independent producer, Mary Phelan, for Donegal County Council Cultural Services, of interviews with older people from around the county, who were either hired out as young people, or whose family was involved in hiring people. Collection contains eleven interviews and four Highland Radio programmes. Interviewees include Joe McFadden, Falcarragh; Charlie Sweeny, Gortahork; men from Lakehouse, Dunfanaghy who remembered hiring fairs even though they were not hired out themselves; John Devanney, Ranafast; Antoin Friel, Leitiread, Termon; Charlie Ferry, Station Road, Falcarragh (field recordings); Dennis Boyce, Ranafast; and Eliza Roulston, Dunfanaghy/Ramelton (field recording).

Access & Usage:

The material is housed at Donegal County Archives and Collection Number: OH/3. Note: Some handwritten field note records associated with OH/3 in File OH/1-3. Two typed log sheets for Charlie Ferry and Antóin Friel interviews. Accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives



Education Signpost

Of interest to researchers exploring fairs and the economy around cattle and farming. An important insight into the reality of farming life from an economic point-of-view. Also illustrates the social and cultural importance of fairs to rural people in County Donegal.

McGlynn Interviews

Collection Holder: Aiden McGlynn

A series of seven interviews with Patrick Bartley McGlynn (Padraig Partlann Mc Fhloinn) b.1932 from Gleann Fhinne in the Donegal Bluestack Mountains. The interviews were conducted by his son Aiden McGlynn and explore Patrick's memories of leaving home at the age of thirteen to work as a farmhand in County Tyrone in 'The Big House'. The interviews also recount Patrick's emigration to Scotland in the 1940s and his work in various cities through the UK, his later marriage and return to Donegal where he lived the rest of his life in Four Masters.

The collection holder also noted that a recording had been made in the 1960s of his grandfather Bartley McGlynn / Bartley Den McGlynn, Garvan, Cloghan (d. 1979). Bartley was the author of a poem in c.1940s, which was later converted into a song *An Ríleán*, sung by his granddaughter, Joanne McGlynn.²⁵

Access & Usage:

The interviews were recorded digitally (Widows Media Audio (WMA) - M4A file) by Aiden McGlynn in the home of his father. For more information, contact:
Aiden McGlynn
E-mail: aidenmcglynn@hotmail.com



Education Signpost

Of significant interest to anyone exploring the experience of both emigrants and migrants from Donegal. The interviews also have an importance in relation to work life, farming and the social and cultural backdrop of Patrick Bartley McGlynn's life in Donegal, Tyrone, Scotland and across the UK. The recordings are of particular importance to younger people in order to appreciate the changes to young teenage lives, reflected in Patrick's story, in particular his departure from home at the age of thirteen.

²⁵ An Ríleán is the name of the river (and bridge) which runs through the heart of the Gaeltacht.

Mervyn McKean Interview
Collection Holder: David McKean

A short interview with Mervyn McKean, Longvale House, Porthall conducted by his wife Jean. The interview explores Mervyn's memories of growing up in Porthall and discusses the local history associated with that area. The interview was conducted as part of the 'History Links' project in St. Johnston.

Access & Usage:

For more information, contact:

David McKean

Telephone: (074) 914 1318



Education Signpost

The 'History Links' project asked people to share their stories and experiences of childhood and growing up; of how and where they worked through the years; of leisure activities and living and of the heritage of their area. Through sharing both their personal histories and the histories of each of their communities, the 'History Links' project hoped to show there is much more common ground to unite than difference to divide.

Muckish Development Group Collection

Collection Holder: Gerard Duffy

The Muckish Development Group in north Donegal have interviewed at least ten local people regarding local history and lore. Interviewees include Danny Ward, Thomas Doherty and Willie Kelly who all worked on Muckish. The group also interviewed Barney and Paddy Coyle, brothers who spent time in Letterfrack Industrial School, as well as Mary Gamble and Charlie Mc Connell, a local poet. The interviews were carried out in video and were conducted by Ed Humm and Gerry Duffy.

Access & Usage

The DVD *Glass Mountain: the story of Muckish Sand* produced by Muckish Development, included interviews with former quarrymen. The forty-minute history documentary tells the story of the iconic Muckish and the role it played in the manufacture of glass for many years. The documentary features footage from the 1940s and 1950s, of workers on the mountain, as well as photographs, documents and interviews with some of the men who worked on the site. These stories were also published in a local magazine called *The Creeslough View*. They are all held as part of Gerard Duffy's private collection.

For more information, see <http://www.creeslough.com/Muckish.html> or contact:
Gerry Duffy
Telephone: (087) 610 9331
E-mail: creesloughview@gmail.com



Education Signpost

Those interested in trade, manufacturing, industry and employment will find significant insight within this important collection and the associated documentary *Glass Mountain: the story of Muckish Sand*.

National Folklore Collection

Collection Holder: Department of Folklore, UCD

The National Folklore Collection, UCD, is home to one of the largest collections of oral and ethnological material in the world. The collection has at least 546 items relating to County Donegal folklore, tradition, customs and history, from a variety of collectors, across many decades in both the Irish and English language. While many full-time and part-time collectors have contributed hugely to this material, the work of Seán Ó hEochaidh can be fore-grounded as critical for the documentation of Donegal folklore.

The sound collection of the National Folklore Collection includes wax cylinder recordings, the earliest of which date from 1897.²⁶ The Irish Folklore Commission continued its collection programmes amidst a gradually evolving technological environment. Tape recorders introduced in the late 1950s, enabled collectors to record at greater length and sound quality. Before tape recorders, the Commission's field collectors used gramophone recorders to make high-quality sound recordings in the field. Note: Under the supervision of Anna Bale, some 1,300 of these cylinders have been carefully digitised by Henri Chamoux of the French company L'Archéophone, and their contents are now being transcribed by staff at the National Folklore Collection.

Access & Usage:

Department of Folklore, UCD is available to visit on appointment. There are a team of highly-skilled and experienced archivists who are intimately familiar with the collection. Researchers wishing to listen to audio are advised to e-mail bealoideas@ucd.ie for an appointment or phone the number below. The department have made significant efforts in recent years to create access to the collection, including through: www.duchas.ie

For further information, contact:

National Folklore Collection,
Newman Building,
University College Dublin

Telephone: (01) 716 8216

E-mail: bealoideas@ucd.ie

Website: www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore/en/

Education Signpost

The material housed in Department of Folklore, UCD is one of the most extensive and richest sources of folklore in the world. The work of collectors like Seán Ó hEochaidh is carefully storied and archived in the collection. Exploration of this material opens up new vistas into the past in Donegal and all enthusiasts, scholars and historians should be encouraged to make use of it, within the limitations as set down by the Department of Folklore, UCD.

²⁶ The Ediphone wax cylinder recording machine was an essential tool for early twentieth-century folklore collectors who were anxious to preserve authentic examples of folk narrative, song and music which could be later played back and transcribed.

Ó Cadhain i dTír Chonaill Collection

Collection Holder: Department of Folklore, UCD

Twenty-four interviews recorded in 1957 by the Irish language writer Máirtín Ó Cadhain with Pádraig O Baoighill, an author, broadcaster and journalist from Rann na Feirste in the Gaeltacht region of Donegal.²⁷ The project was undertaken under the auspices of Gael Linn and was recorded in Míin an Aoire, Baile na Finne, Rann na Feirste and Gaoth Dobhair. The project was initially suggested by Ó Cadhain, who with Ó Baoighill was very active in Choiste Mhuintir na Gaeltachta in Dublin. Many of the ancient stories in the Fenian cycle are foregrounded in the recordings. Other stories recorded include '*An Cnochaire Tarnocht*', '*Éamann an Ubhla Dheirg*', '*Níon Rí na Bhfear Donn*' and '*Mac Rí na hÉireann agus an Fear Rua*'.

Access & Usage

The material formed the basis of a publication by Ó Baoighill entitled *Ó Cadhain i dTír Chonaill* and published by Coiscéim in 2007. The book includes profiles of each of the twenty-four storytellers included in the recording project in 1957. In addition, RTÉ Radio 1 ran a series on the recordings in 2009, which aired much of the material recorded by Ó Cadhain and Ó Baoighill. The material can be heard at: http://www.rte.ie/radio1/podcast/podcast_ocadhain.xml

For further information, contact:
National Folklore Collection,
Newman Building,
University College Dublin
Telephone: (01) 716 8216
Website: www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore

Education Signpost

A hugely significant undertaking at a time, when it was felt the language in the Gaeltacht areas of the country was waning. The material is collected from storytellers whose tradition and lore stretched back to ancient times. Of interest to anyone enthusiastic about the Irish language and ancient lore as well as linguists generally.

²⁷ Pádraig Ó Baoighill has been a prolific writer and broadcaster on this native Donegal and has published over ten books in both Irish and English. In 2005, Ulster University bestowed an honorary Doctorate on Ó Baoighill.

Raymoghly Parish Collection

Collection Holder: Ann Carroll (Raymoghly Parishes Historical Society)

The Raymoghly Parish Collection consists of recorded interviews with twenty-three senior citizens of the Raymoghly Parish in north Donegal. The interviews were undertaken at the local Community Resource Centre in 2009 and at an Old Folk's Christmas Party later that year by Ann Carroll, Michel Meehan, Teresa McLaughlin, and Aoibheann Diver. It is the intention of the Raymoghly Parishes Historical Society to conduct further interviews.²⁸ The interviews reflect on the lives and memories of those interviewed, which goes in the general direction of their individual life stories and how these experiences intersect with the history of Raymoghly parish. Reflections include farming and agricultural change, traditional and calendar customs, religion, emigration, education, sport, entertainment, placenames and local history.

Access & Usage:

The material formed the basis of a book edited by Ann Carroll, entitled *Memories of our Past: Transcription of Recorded Interviews with some of the Senior Citizens of Raymoghly Parish, Donegal* (Raymoghly Parish Historical Society, 2015). The ninety-two page book contains full transcriptions of each of the twenty-three interviews, including relevant photographs, where possible. The original interviews are on DVDs (seven disks) in the possession of the editor but sound quality is poor. The audio material is not available to the public. For further information, contact: Raymoghly Parish Historical Society, Raymoghly, County Donegal

Education Signpost

The material is of value to any scholar, historian or interested individual studying local history, particularly relating to north Donegal. The material also opens up the experience and family tradition of twenty-three individuals, providing an insight into the life in the Raymoghly area over the last century. Primary and Post-Primary students will particularly benefit from a deeper understanding of cultural and socio-economic change within a rural context.

²⁸ Correspondence, Ann Carroll to author, 02 October 2016

Richard McCafferty Collection

Collection Holder: Richard McCafferty

A significant collection of local recorded material relating to the Glenties area of Donegal. The work of Richard McCafferty in maintaining the collection bequeaths over 2,000 items of recorded material stretching over three decades. Glenties set up its own cable system in 1975 and when domestic video cameras came on the scene in 1981, the local community were able to purchase one for the purpose of generating material for a local TV channel 'Glenties Video Club' (GVC) that was set up on the cable system.²⁹ A number of local people were involved in conducting interviews for GVC. The collection includes sound recordings from short-lived local radio station in Glenties in 1982. Richard McCafferty continued to record local events since the closure of the TV channel in 1987 and built up an archive of video recordings. These include the material generated for local TV between 1975 and 1987 and the material collected by McCafferty himself, amounting to over 2,000 items between thirty seconds and four hours in length.

The recordings cover religious, social, sporting and some historic events. Also recorded were plays, musicals, concerts, ordinations, talks and interviews, Bord na Mona - Glenties, interview with World War I veteran, first communions, confirmations, baptisms, weddings, Corpus Christi processions, secondary school debts, Donegal railways, MacGill Summer School events and some lectures, local harvest fairs, GAA games, sports days, some soccer games, local religious and historic sites, family videos, Tidy Towns items, history of local buildings - a project by school children, local news and retirements. About 20% of the collection of videos were recorded from other TV Channels if the programmes were of local interest.

Access & Usage:

Richard McCafferty spent four years transferring to DVD and digitising the material, which is now catalogued and indexed. McCafferty hopes to publish a book based on some of his recordings over the years, in particular stories from his own father and neighbours around Ballyshannon, Belleek and Bundoran. For more information, contact:

Richard McCafferty

E-mail: mccafferty@eircom.net

Education Signpost

Of interest to historians or scholars researching the area of south Donegal and, in particular, Glenties. Local people in that area would benefit hugely from access to this material to reinforce their own knowledge of place and history.

²⁹ Correspondence, Richard McCafferty to author, 07 November 2016

RTÉ & Raidió na Gaeltachta Archives Collection Holder: Radio Telifís Éireann (RTÉ)

Given the diffuse nature of RTÉ programming, identification of material specific to Donegal on a comprehensive basis, was difficult. Over the history of RTÉ in both its television and radio (RTÉ radio and Raidió na Gaeltachta) formats, significant attention has been paid to the county and the Archives of the organisation contain considerable material from a variety of documentaries and programmes. For example, before local radio stations were established, RTÉ ran a local radio service, during which they visited towns and villages for a week and broadcast locally produced programmes. Most communities dealt with their local heritage as well as more contemporary material. They came to Glenties in August/September 1982 with Pauric O'Neill providing commentary on a variety of subjects including greyhound racing. Insightful documentaries like *Bealoideas: A People's Past*, spearheaded by Joe Mulholland in 1977, celebrated the life and work of Seán Ó hEochaidh, with interviews and considerable footage in Donegal. *'Nuclear Bunkers Tickets for Sale'*, a 'Morning Ireland' report by Cathal MacCoille broadcast on 29 May 1986, features Jackson's Hotel in Ballybofey, preparing for nuclear disaster.³⁰ In 'The Country Was Jubilant', Joseph O'Doherty, who had been elected for Donegal North (1919), recalls the programme of events for the meeting of the first Dáil.³¹

Other available RTÉ Archive features include Mrs. Róise Green (known as Róise na nAmhrán), who tells how she was born on the mainland and came to live on Arranmore following the death of her father as a young girl. She sings *Ansach na nAnsacht (Love of Loves)*, versions of which can be found in all the Gaeltacht areas generally under the title *Cuaichín Ghleann Néifinn (The Little Cuckoo of Glen Nefin)*.³² Róise describes coming to live on the island with her mother and two sisters as orphans following the death of their father. When she was fourteen she was hired out to work in County Tyrone. She learned her songs from her mother who would sing when she was carding wool. Dr Seán Ó hEochaidh of the Irish Folklore Commission was with Proinsias on Arranmore Island and he prompts Róise to speak and sing. Given the large Gaeltacht area in Donegal, Raidió na Gaeltachta programming will also have placed significant attention on the county over many years.

Access & Usage:

RTÉ Archives are responsible for collecting, preserving and making accessible the creative and documentary output of the national broadcaster. For more information, visit their comprehensive website at: <http://www.rte.ie/archives/>
E-mail: archives@rte.ie

Education Signpost

The diverse nature of memory and tradition within the RTÉ Archives presents an almost endless educational benefit across a wide range of themes.

³⁰ *'Nuclear Bunkers Ticks for Sale'* <http://www.rte.ie/archives/2016/0526/791179-donegal-disco-doubles-as-nuclear-bunker/>

³¹ *'The Country Was Jubilant 1919'*, <http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/920-first-dail-eireann-1919/289503-the-first-dail-joseph-odoherty-t-d/>

³² *'Róise na nAmhrán'*, <http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1981-proinsias-o-conluain/615606-rainn-mhr-rise-na-namhrn/>

Seán Dorrian Collection - Ballyshannon
Collectin Holder: Seán Dorrian

A collection of sixteen CDs (twenty interviews), made by local historian Seán Dorrian from Ballyshannon. The interviews were undertaken for Western Ways Community Radio and relate to a broad range of local history and memory. They were broadcast on a show called *The Rest Is History*. Themes include life stories, surfing, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, ESB, republican tradition, customs, farming, rural life, handball, and Brass and Reed bands.

Access & Usage:

The radio station which generated these interviews has since closed down. Seán currently holds the collection of CDs privately but is positive towards the idea of their future use. For more information, write to:

Seán Dorrian,
Erne Street,
Ballyshannon,
County Donegal

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Education Signpost

Seán Dorrian is a committed local historian and collector. His collection reflects on his own curiosity and determination to record his local heritage and lore. The material is diverse but an important contribution to Ballyshannon and Donegal history.

Seosamh Ó Ceallaigh Collection

Collection Holder: Seosamh Ó Ceallaigh

Collected from 1999 to 2004 by Seosamh O'Ceallaigh, consisting of approximately forty interviews with senior citizens in the Cloughaneely area of Donegal. In addition, there are three recordings with former Gardaí who were stationed in the area in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Subjects include general local history but with a focus on the Irish War of Independence, the Black and Tans, the Civil War and early years of An Garda Síochána. Originally recorded in cassette tape and VHS. Currently being digitised. Dr. Seosamh Ó Ceallaigh is an academic, author, local historian and native Irish speaker from Falcarragh in County Donegal.

People recorded include Breen Mc Callion who was in his 90s and whose father worked for John Olphert (landlord). Breen was the last living person to remember seeing John Olphert who died in 1917. Also recorded were the Doherty sisters Nan, Maureen and Rose who were daughters of the famous Irish writer Antoine Ó Dochartaigh. In the recordings, they recall a great deal about the Irish War of Independence in Donegal. John Coyle was also recorded, whose father was in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and left and trained the IRA Volunteers. Sarah Mc Gee, who was taught by Antoine Ó Dochartaigh in Ballyboes and who remembered the Black and Tans was also interviewed. Ó Ceallaigh also recorded Charlie Mc Geever (99) in 1999. McGeever was a former IRA volunteer in War of Independence. The collection also includes Bridget Gallagher, former member of Cumann na mBan. Various recordings are also included about an Canónach Mac Giolla Cheara - family members - Katie Mc Menamin, Paddy Carr and a number of people in Fanad who remembered Canon Kerr (1888-1956), also some other Cloughaneely people such as Conal Ó Dómhnaill and Seán o hEochaidh.

Seosamh's father, also a local historian interviewed approximately ten older people living in the same area in the 1970s. These were recorded on old reel-to-reel machine and at the time of writing are being digitised.

Access & Usage:

The material has been used by Ó Ceallaigh to write articles and (as yet unpublished) material relating largely to policing and law in Cloughaneely. Ó Ceallaigh will publish a book on the Easter Rising of 1916 in 2017.

Education Signpost

Of significant interest to scholars of the Irish Revolutionary Period in Donegal and, in particular, north Donegal. A significant insight into the social memory of the period as conveyed in a series of interviews from a range of people who both experienced the period first-hand and those who inherited valuable oral tradition.

Sheila Friel Collection

Collection Holder: Sheila Friel

Sheila Friel, a historian and author from Milford, made six recordings with elderly people from the Milford area in the mid-1990s. All recordings took place in Milford on VHS tape and formed part of the research for *Milford, Towards the Millennium*, published in 1997. The interviews focused on life in the past and explored multiple themes including the fairs, farming, work life, customs, traditions and local history. Among those interviewed were: Lisa Boyce, who spoke about her brothers going to the hiring fairs and about her mother spinning wool. Robert McElhenny, a native of Island Roy, was also interviewed and spoke about first working as a shop boy, before later owning his own shop in Milford. Also interviewed was Una Marley (nee McCafferty), who in 1938 was a contributor to the Irish Folklore Commission's Schools' Folklore Scheme. In that scheme, she recorded that she had visited and spoke to a man in Milford, who in 1878 had come on the scene of the death of the Third Earl of Leitrim. William Sydney Clements, Third Earl of Leitrim was assassinated on 2 April 1878. Clements had been an Anglo-Irish landlord who was notorious for his mistreatment of his tenants. A monument with a cross was set up at Kindrum in 1960 honouring McElwee, Shiels, and Michael Heraghty as the men whose actions "Ended the tyranny of landlordism".³³ The contribution of Una Marley (then Una McCafferty) can be seen on the Dúchas.ie site at: <http://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4493672/4409654>

Access & Usage:

The material was integrated into the 1997 publication *Milford, Towards the Millennium* which explored the local history and folklore of Milford. The collection holder intends on getting the material digitised in the near future.

Education Signpost

The McCafferty interview in particular is a powerful reminder of the way in which oral tradition can flow from generation to generation and link back to events in the distant past. In 1938, because of the Irish Folklore Commission's Schools' Folklore Scheme, Una McCafferty visited a local elderly man to document tradition and history. His memory took him back to 1878 and his coming on the scene of the killing of William Sydney Clements, Third Earl of Leitrim. When Una McCafferty (then Una Marley) passed this story on to Sheila Friel in the mid-1990s, the story was preserved in its oral form. The digitisation of this video tape will once more open up that flow of oral heritage, this time in recorded form.

³³ Malcomson, A.P.W. *Virtues of a Wicked Earl: The Life and Legend of William Sydney Clements, 3rd Earl of Leitrim*. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008)

Solitaire Films Collection
Collection Holder: Peter Alexander

Eight interviews which were filmed for the production of a DVD by Solitaire Films entitled *The Way We Were*. The DVD, which was produced in 2008, reflects the memories of those interviewed, recollecting life in Ardara in the past. Interviewees include:

Nan Sweeney, Portnoo Road, Ardara

John Cunningham, Wood Road, Ardara

Jack Maguire, Front Street, Ardara

Andy McNelis (now deceased), Killybegs Road, Ardara

Danny Haughey (deceased), Glenties Road, Ardara

Access & Usage:

The interviews were originally recorded on tape and was later digitised by Peter Alexander who led the project and conducted the interviews. The DVD *The Way We Were* was produced in 2008. For further information, contact:

E-mail: solitairefilms@gmail.com

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Education Signpost

An instructive resource for people looking to glean an overall feel for life in the past in Ardara and in Donegal generally. Although edited, the material is broad and offers a powerful insight into life in the past as well as the societal and cultural changes that the older generation saw in their lifetimes.

**Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives
Collection Holder: New York University**

A small number of important interviews conducted through various projects, focusing on Irish immigrants from Donegal to America.

Aisling Irish Community Center Oral History Collection (AIA.035)

An interview with Bridget Glendon, a native of Letterkenny in County Donegal who was one of the women at the Seniors at Young at Heart Group at the Aisling Irish Community Center in Yonkers, who spoke to The Irish Voice to share their fondest memories of Christmas in the past in Ireland, and what the occasion meant to them. The interview was conducted in 2007

Ireland House Oral History Collection (AIA.030)

A collection of interviews conducted in America with emigrants from County Donegal or relating to Donegal. The following interviews are listed in the Ireland House Oral History Collection which have Donegal in their descriptions: Sr. Tesa Fitzgerald, Ira Goldman, Lisa Johnston, Seamus Ó Fianghusa, Sr. Eileen Corcoran, and John E. Sexton.

Access & Usage:

For more information, visit the Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at: <https://www.nyu.edu/library/bobst/research/tam/>

Contact:

Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives,
Elmer Holmes Bobst Library,
70 Washington Square South, 10th Floor,
New York, NY 10012
U.S.A.
E-mail: tamiment.wagner@nyu.edu

Education Signpost

Of significant interest to anyone studying the experience of County Donegal natives emigrating to America.

Tower House Collection - The Railways

Collection Holder: Tower Museum, Derry

Seven interviews recorded in the late 1980s by various Foyle Valley Railway staff, exploring Donegal railways with predominantly former railway workers. Themes include wages and conditions of employment, wartime, smuggling, rules and hi-jacking. Interviewees included:

Seamus Doherty 1/11/88: Seamus talks about the wages and conditions of employment. He recalls his jobs and what they entailed, he remembers the staff. He talks of the four railways and wartimes, the blackout and accidents.

John Breslin 4/11/88: John talks of when he worked in the railways and of all the jobs he did. He tells how the railway's history was a family one with grandfathers, fathers and sons all working in it. He recalls the railway during the war.

Terence Carlin 24/10/88: Terence worked for the Great Northern Railway. He remembers the people he worked with and the nicknames they had. He tells of an incident during the blackout when a blind man led a party of 60 girls down Bishop Street. He also tells of the accident in 1956 in which nine men were killed in Omagh.

James O'Reilly 24/10/88: James started as a porter in 1941, he talks about the four railways, the staff employed on them, the war, blackouts and smuggling. He talks of accidents such as crashing and derailments. He also remembers the good times on the railways.

Arthur Thompson 28/8/88: Arthur talks of the railways in the northwest and of the four in Derry. He talks of his hopes for the future.

Redmond Gallagher 2/10/88 (Side A): Redmond talks of how he became involved with the railways, of the railway society and how it started and, finally, its aims for the future.

Danny Meenan 13/10/88 (Side B): Danny worked on the Great Northern Railway from 1943-1969. He talks of rules, wages and war times. He tells the story of the train hi-jacked in Strabane, the other railways and accidents that happened.

Access & Usage:

The material is scheduled to be digitised from cassette format in early 2017. For more information, contact:

Ronan Mc Connell, Acting Education Officer,
Derry City & Strabane District Council
E-mail: ronan.mcconnell@derrystrabane.com

Education Signpost

The collection of interviews offers an important testimony on the value and central role of railways at a time in Irish history and in the history of Donegal. Students, scholars and researchers of railways, economic development and workers conditions will benefit from this material.

Ulster Farming Families Collection
Collection Holder: Ulster Folk & Transport Museum

Three interviews conducted by Jonathan Bell for *Ulster Farming Families, 1930-1960*. The interviews form part of the research undertaken over many years by Jonathan Bell and Mervyn Watson into farming and agricultural life in Ulster. The following were recorded as part of this project:

Bríd Coll of Gaoth Dobhair, County Donegal (UFTM tape R2000.99)

Bríd Coll's family, like many in Gaoth Dobhair, depended on the income earned by migrant work in Scotland, and hiring in Ulster. Bríd's account is particularly important in its description of her experience as a hired servant in her home area between the ages of 8 and 12, in Machaire Gathlán.

Cormac McFadden Dunfanaghy, County Donegal (UFTM tape R79.35)

Cormac McFadden grew up on a farm in Roshin, north County Donegal, where the three arable acres were not enough to support the family. Cormac was hired locally as a boy, and his brothers worked in Scotland and the USA.

Mick McHugh of Hornhead, County Donegal (UFTM tape R81.115)

Mick McHugh lived all his life on the family farm at Hornhead. The family supplemented income from farming by a wide range of work including fishing, horse-trading, joinery, migrant labour, and farm service. His testimony provides a clear account of the diversity of tasks undertaken by farming families whose holdings were too small to work as independent commercial enterprises.

Access & Usage:

The material was published as *Ulster Farming Families, 1930-1960* in 2005 by Ulster Historical Foundation in association with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. This book uses oral history to explore life on Ulster farms between 1930 and 1960 and describes in fascinating detail the many changes in practically every aspect of working life and their associated patterns of social life, all in the face of increasing government intervention, globalisation of markets, and the cataclysm of the Second World War. The oral testimonies on which the book is based show that, for farming people, change could and did create new relationships and wider opportunities on both a professional and personal level. For more information, contact:

Peter Carson, Audio Technical Officer,
National Museums Northern Ireland,
Cultra, Holywood, County Down, BT18 0EU
Website: <http://nmni.com/uftm>



Education Signpost

Of interest to anyone exploring the level of change that has come to the agricultural sector and rural life generally in the twentieth century. Although focused on Donegal and part of a concentration on Ulster, the material is relevant to students from across the country. Machinery, mechanisation, social and cultural life in rural Ulster are explored.

**Ulster Folk and Transport Museum - Sound Recordings
Collection Holder: Ulster Folk and Transport Museum**

Forty-nine interviews from 1982 to 2000 relating to a broad range of subjects across County Donegal including music, dances in Donegal, religion, ballads, boat building, fishing, co-operative labour, trades and worklife.

Access & Usage:

For more information, contact:

Peter Carson,
Audio Technical Officer,
National Museums Northern Ireland,
Cultra,
Holywood,
County Down,
BT18 0EU
Website: <http://nmni.com/uftm>



Education Signpost

A large collection which predominantly relates to traditional music. Of interest to scholars of the social context of music and musicology. Also a vital resource for the surrounding cultural context of traditional music and culture in County Donegal. Because the material was collected across almost two decades, the inevitable changes and patterns that will be presented in the recordings are also of value.

Welshtown Folklore Collection
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/5)

A second oral history collection compiled by Bernadette Sansom and the pupils of Welshtown National School as part of the Donegal Historical Society's Schools' Competition. The theme of the competition when the collection was compiled in 2008 was 'Folklore'. Topics include cures, farming, forts, stories, knitting, traditional music, school and Glenmore House. Interviewees include Charlie Gallagher, Susan Blackburn, Anna Mai Bonner, Jack Patton, Freddy Hardy and others.

Access & Usage:

The Welshtown Collection carries a cautionary note for collection holders. In 2010, a fire in the home of the holder resulted in the destruction of the original material. However, due to their earlier deposition with Donegal County Archives, the material is secure. The material (three audio tapes) is housed at Donegal County Archives and Collection Number: OH/5. Transcriptions of the material were also provided and can be viewed by appointment at Donegal County Archives. Accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives



Education Signpost

Of significant interest to students of social history who are exploring the twentieth century from the perspective of local experience. A broad range of life experience and associated customs, tradition and change can be traced within this collection.

'1946' - Oral History Recordings
Collection Holder: Donegal County Archives (OH/4)

This collection was undertaken in April 2006 by Bernadette Sansom and the pupils of Welshtown National School as part of the Donegal Historical Society's Schools' Competition. The theme of the competition was 1946 and interviews were conducted with Mr. Vincent Campbell, Mr. Thomas McDyer, Mr. Owen Ward. Mr. Cormac Quinn, Mrs. Nora Breslin and Mrs. Anne McGlynn.

Access & Usage

The material (two audio tapes) is housed at Donegal County Archives, Lifford, County Donegal. There are transcripts of some of the interviews. They can be accessed on appointment through:

Dr. Niamh Brennan,
Donegal County Archives,
Three Rivers' Centre,
Lifford,
County Donegal
Telephone: (074) 917 2490
E-mail: nbrennan@donegalcoco.ie
Website: www.donegalcoco.ie/culture/archives



Education Signpost

The material in this collection is of value to anyone studying the social, economic and cultural reality of life in the immediate aftermath of World War II or 'The Emergency' as it was called in the Irish Republic (then Free State). There will also be a wealth of local historical knowledge and information on the area of Welshtown in County Donegal.

Collecting Oral History & Folklore - Advice & Guidelines

While this audit illustrates that the collection of oral heritage has been a practice for many decades, there is an evident increase in interest in recent years. This has been driven by an increasing digital capacity and ease with which the past can now be documented for posterity. Individuals and groups across County Donegal who wish to collect oral history and folklore should be encouraged. However, there are some considerations which are suggested below. These will assist in maximising the overall endeavour and ensure that the efforts made will impact long into the future. Prior to the collection of oral history, there are a number of important considerations both at a collective group level, as well as for the individual collector. It is important to appreciate and to attend to all of the aspects involved in oral history and folklore collection from research and preparation through to archival and access considerations.

Research & Preparation

“The good collector then should be an opportunist, ready to take advantage of every chance to reap his or her harvest of lore.”

Seán Ó Suilleabháin – *Handbook of Irish Folklore*

Research and preparation are of critical importance to the successful interview. The more research that the collector undertakes and the more prepared that he/she is, the more comfortable the process will be. This, in turn, will minimise discomfort for the interviewee and will create optimal conditions for a free-flowing and rich exploration of memory.

Legal & Ethical Issues

For all oral history groups, the issue of ethics is vital. A clearly defined and understood ethical position is critical to developing a trusted and sustainable collection effort. Each oral history collection group or individual should ensure that all interviews occur according to best practice and informed consent. Each participant or interviewee should be aware of all the possible uses of the material

including its preservation as a permanent public reference resource for appropriate use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet. The laws in this area are complex and each project is different. However, it is the responsibility of each project to ensure that an informed consent process is in place and that each collector undertakes to follow this process for each interview. Interviewees have rights to privacy and to the ownership of their own words, which is enshrined in the copyright laws. This ensures both the integrity and continuity of an oral history project and safeguards each narrator's rights. Key aspects of the informed consent process include the need to obtain permission to archive and publish the interview in certain formats. It should also be clear to the interviewee who the interview is for, where it will be stored and how the interview may be used. It is critical to obtain a written consent from each interviewee. This should also be supplemented by an oral consent (to the interview) at the beginning of each interview. While the issue of ethics and informed consent and the duty to respect the rights of the interviewee should be taken seriously, it is important for collectors to realise that most interviews do not contain sensitive personal information.

Points to Remember

- Interviewees are sharing private, often precious and perhaps difficult memories – The collector must be sensitive to this within and after interview.
- Make sure you have done adequate research before interview. The more you have researched and prepared, the less likely an ethical issue will arise.
- Once copyright has been assigned to you, you are free to publish the interview in any form, subject to limitations the interviewee may stipulate.

The Fifty-Year Rule

Many collections of oral history identified within the Donegal audit, did not attend to the fundamentals of recording details, which can cause significant issues for their later use and interpretation. A useful thought process is to imagine your interview being found in fifty years time, disconnected from the collection it had originally been attached to. If you have followed the outlined process, then whoever listened to the interview should be aware of the following;

- Who is the interviewee?
- Who is the interviewer?
- What project was it recorded for?
- Where recorded?
- Date recorded?
- Anyone else in the room at the time of the recording?
- Did the interviewee consent to being recorded?



RED LIST FOR CONSERVATION OF COLLECTIONS AT RISK

Within the audit, the deterioration of analog sound carriers was recognised as a significant danger to collections relating to County Donegal. Oral history collections identified in the audit face an immediate threat from the degradation of physical media and declining support for older audio formats from today's technology industries. A more detailed assessment of the audit and 'Red List' in consultation with the client will signpost practical conservation and storage measures and will help in arriving at the optimum guidelines for individuals and groups to preserve at-risk collections. A significant percentage of the sound recording formats identified within the audit from reel-to-reel to cassette tape and minidisks, rely on equipment which is no longer manufactured or supported by today's technology industries.

Reel-to-reel material may in fact be degrading (or have degraded) to the point of irreparability. The broad consensus internationally is that by 2030, technological obsolescence will make the preservation of this material increasingly costly and difficult. While these risks are relevant to all recorded sound collections relating to County Donegal, from boxes of forgotten micro-cassettes to professional archives, the below 'Red List' identified some priority holdings. For these collections, the digital transfer of oral recordings to more reliable and stable media (digital files held on replicated digital storage) is urgent. Ultimately, as recognised by the International Association of Sound and Audio-Visual Archives (IASA), “only the digital domain offers the possibility of lossless copying when refreshing or migrating recordings. For the long-term preservation of the primary information contained on an analogue carrier it is necessary, therefore, to first transfer it to the digital domain”.³⁴ The below are noted as particular priorities. However, material identified across the entire audit, requires safeguarding to the best archival standards.

Donegal Ancestry Folklore Project

Current Format: Micro-Cassette Tapes

This material contains a wealth of folklore, history, tradition and memory, carefully collected in 1994. The current format is very sensitive and requires digitisation as soon as possible. Its digitisation will enable the discovery of information on the collection which has been lost since it was undertaken.

Fr. Jackie Fitzgerald Collection (Buncrana & Letterkenny Libraries)

Current Format: Cassette Tapes

A significant undertaking, this vast collection of almost 700 tapes is currently unusable. There seem to be a number of copies within the collection which could facilitate a prioritisation that could reduce the scope of its digitisation.

Boyle Collection

Current Format: Reel-to-Reel

This material should be digitised as soon as possible. The material (seven reel-to-reel recordings) was collected in the 1950s and 1960s and cannot be currently played in its existing format.

³⁴ Safeguarding the Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy (web edition), <http://www.iasa-web.org/tc03/ethics-principles-preservation-strategy>

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